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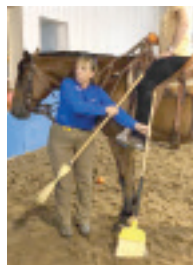
ISSUE NO. 105

HORSEMAN



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Deb Bennett, Ph.D. teaches unique anatomy short-courses and horsemanship clinics designed to be enjoyable to riders of all breeds and disciplines, and all levels of skill. Internationally known for her scientific approach to conformation analysis, "Dr. Deb" has made a career out of conveying a kind of "X-ray vision" for bone structure to breeders and buyers. Her background helps her clearly explain how conformation relates to performance ability. Learn more at equinestudies.org.

Sue Chiverton Always a horse lover, but not a horse owner until middle age hit and the journey started in earnest. Lots of learning through a great range of horsemanship clinics, making an honest effort at figuring out what "dressage" is, and, with a move to rural New Mexico, new horizons in a Californian bridle horse program and the seductiveness of cow work. That all, finally, turned me to seriously focus on good classical schooling and balanced movement that can become a dance between horse and rider. And it's now clear to me: it's not about the discipline, it's not about the breed, it's not about the gear, it's just about understanding biomechanics and how to help your horse move well, stay sound and supple to be a partner for many years, and all done, of course, with mindful, focused, patient horsemanship. The western gear is way cooler in so many ways, but my dressage saddle is a whole lot easier to toss up onto my horse!

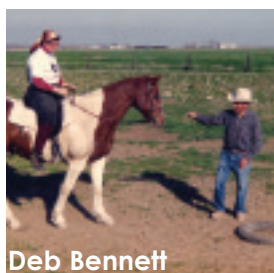
Connie Crawford is a professor of performance and public speaking at Brown University. She has studied horsemanship with Libby Lyman, Bryan and Luke Neubert and Harry Whitney, among others. Connie uses horsemanship principles she learned from these great teachers to teach actors and medical students to communicate more effectively.

Ben Longwell is a horseman and clinician originally from Colorado, now residing most of the year in New Zealand. He is passionate about the traditional horsemanship of the California vaquero and specializes in colt starting and problem solving, as well as teaching a variety of clinics in New Zealand and the US. Learn more at truwesthorsemanship.com

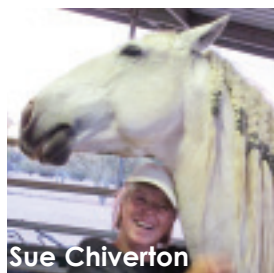
Tom Moates is a leading equestrian author and journalist. His latest book, *Six Colts, Two Weeks - Part 2 Week 2*, is available. More info at tommoates.com.

Cosette Moormans grew up in southwest Virginia across a pedestrian swinging bridge on her family's homestead. Hard work, integrity, and compassion were a deeply ingrained part of her and her two sisters' upbringing. After her first ride bareback over a ridge on an old Amish quarter horse at age five, she was smitten with equines. This passion persisted to finally purchasing two mules during her high school years. After interning with local equestrian Audrey Boone, Cosette traveled this past year with her long ears to Colorado to study under Mindy Bower. She is committed to a lifelong journey of learning and developing quality horsemanship, and aspires to share the life lessons gleaned from working with horses with those suffering from abuse and addiction.

Wendy Murdoch has taught riding internationally since 1987. She first trained with Sally Swift in 1986 and apprenticed with her in 1992. Learn more at wendymurdoch.com.



Deb Bennett



Sue Chiverton

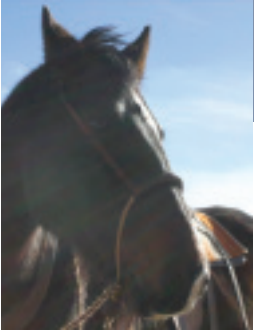


Ben Longwell



Cosette Moormans

On the Cover: This gelding, owned by Alderspring Ranch and known as "Chance," weathers a mid-winter Idaho blizzard. Photo by Melanie Elzinga.



Hi All,

I hope this new year is off to a great start for all of you. January is a very exciting time for me, filled with planning issues of the Magazine and Gazette, making schedules (and resolutions to keep them, and planning filming trips and clinic outings). I wish you the best of luck with your New Year's planning, resolutions and riding goals too!

This winter has been especially challenging for me. The closing of last year saw the end of a 20-year conversation with one of my closest friends. In the early years it started with both of us saying "please don't kill me, please don't hurt me" to each other in various incarnations. It progressed over many years, with ups and downs and adventures to "hey, let's go for a ride here or there; we can trot for hours across the prairie," and matured in the last chapter to "hey, if I lift up my hind leg do you think you could reach that itchy spot?"

Belich challenged me and my growth as a student of horsemanship in so many ways. Big and snorty with baggage of his own, he required that I overcome a lot of fear and be a leader. I was not always successful, but he came to know that my heart was in the right place. I remember in those early days, my friend Mindy Bower, who gave him to me, asking me how I thought it felt to him that I thought he was going to kill me all the time... "Have a little faith in him," she said.

And I can remember that first ride out just the two of us into the "big pasture" like it was yesterday: stomach ache and heart fluttering the whole time heading out at a trot and breathing and smiling on the way back across the prairie, then at a

peaceful walk. We did a lot of trotting around in pastures. He had the best ground-covering trot of any horse I'd ever ridden, and he just fit me... we fit each other.

We had a lot of big adventures, setting out sheep at a trial, riding by the full moon, roping with Dave & Gwynn, riding on the ranch with Buck, a fun dressage clinic in Idaho with Ellen, trying to be a bridle horse with Bruce, a little leaping about in the A-pen with Martin... endless support from Mindy to get started and keep going, and lots of quiet times in the last few years riding with Sydney.

I enjoyed the daily chores, the belly scratches after feeding. I was so thankful to be able to just saddle up and walk around mellowly around the pasture... the little things. Though one time, when he was a dignified 23, we were playing leap frog in the arena with Syd and I couldn't quite get the words "don't ride right up behind me yet" out before she did... and her quote for what happened next was "I didn't think all 4 feet could come off the ground at the same time!"

I know that he was my horse and I was his person, and that is all the accomplishment I could have ever asked for. I know all of you have lost horses and I know this pain that I feel is shared by many of you... you miss the smell, the look, the nicker, the knowledge of every special scratch spot. I will miss the conversation with him of "how can I suit you better, what can I do to improve this good thing we got going?" I will miss my friend.

Take care,

Mission Statement > *To be the best resource to help students develop their own horsemanship.*

The Eclectic Staff

EDITOR & OWNER: Emily Kitching
 DESIGNER & OWNER: Steve Bell
 PROOFREADING: Phyllis Hunt

Postmaster & Letters

Send address changes and letters to:
 Eclectic Horseman
 PO Box 174
 Elbert, CO 80106
 subs@eclectic-horseman.com

Advertising & Other Services

Contact us about ad rates and other eclectic services including Web design and hosting, videography, video post-production, and graphic design.

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 Phone: 303-449-3537 • Fax: 303-468-1516 • Email: info@eclectic-horseman.com



Riding Clinic With Wendy *Leg position*

By Wendy Murdoch

One of the most common rider issues I see is leg position. Regardless of the type of saddle, most riders have been taught “heels down” without the understanding of the intention or function of the demand. As a result, riders push, shove and brace to get their heels down only to lose the most important factor necessary for a secure position – a large polygon of sustentation.

The polygon over which your body is sustained when sitting on a horse is larger than when you stand on the ground because you are above the ground on the back of a horse. Lines drawn along your thigh and calf extend to the ground to determine the size of your base of support (BOS) from front to back. The area from left to right forms the lateral sides of the polygon; therefore, there is the potential for a very large area over which your body can be sustained! See Figure 1. Your leg position can alter the size of this polygon, but more importantly, if the line of gravity does not pass through your base of support, you are much less stable.

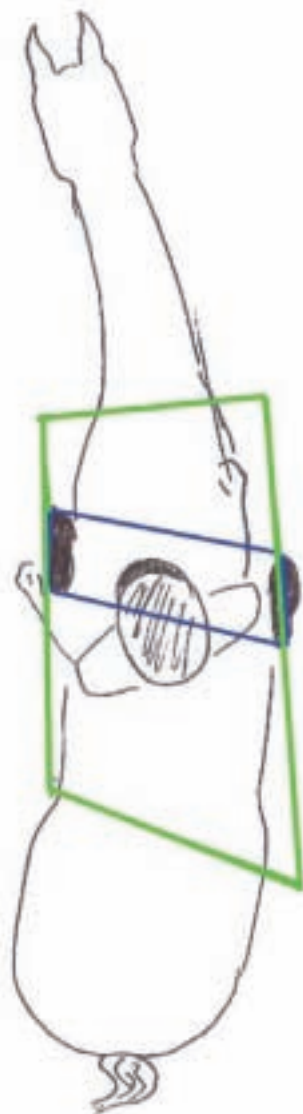


Figure 1. An overhead view of a rider on horse. The blue lines represent the rectangular shape created between the rider's two feet. The green lines represent the extrapolated lines along the line of the thighs and calves extended toward the ground. The surface area over which the rider is sustained when the leg is properly positioned is significantly larger and therefore more stable.

Polygon of Sustentation

I can hear you now... “Poly got of what?” Let me define each word so that you understand how important this idea is for riding.

The French term, Sustentation is defined as “the act of sustaining, the state of being sustained such as a; maintenance, upkeep. b; preservation, conservation.”

When we think of riding we need to be able to maintain, keep, preserve and conserve in our position so that we can ride for long periods of time with a minimum of effort.

“A Polygon is any 2-dimensional shape formed with straight lines. Triangles, quadrilaterals, pentagons, and hexagons are all examples of polygons. For example, a triangle has three sides, and a quadrilateral has four sides.”

The English translation is a polygon of support, which is defined as follows: “The polygon of support is the area where a body lies in balance. If [a person] stands on his two feet, the surface of the polygon will be that of both feet plus the area between the two feet in a classic standing position.”

If the line of gravity falls outside the polygon of support a reaction is needed in order to stay in balance. Therefore the rider will be less stable and have to react in order to stay in balance if the lower leg and foot is pushed forward, ahead of the line of gravity.

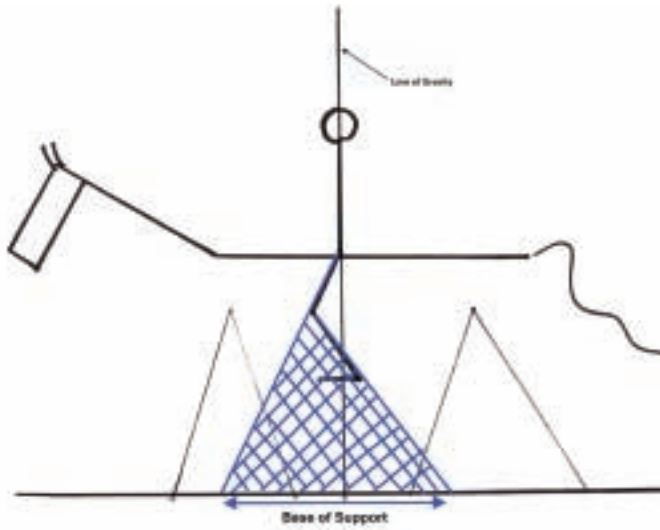


Figure 2. Side view. The line of gravity falls within the BOS triangle created by the line of action along the thigh and calf to the ground. The larger the base the more stability and support for the rider's upper body. This allows the rider to remain upright over the horse.

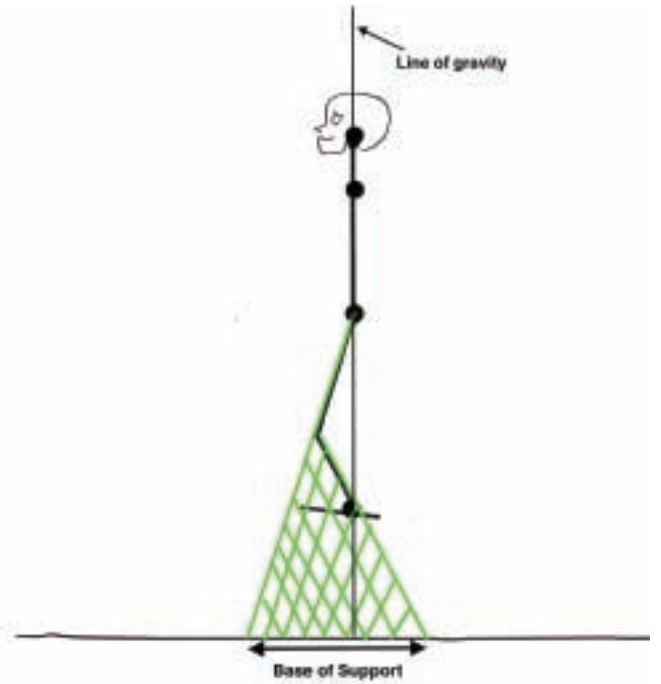


Figure 3. Stirrup length will alter the size of the BOS. A longer stirrup creates a narrower triangle, decreasing the surface area over which the rider is sustained. When riding with longer stirrups, such as dressage and trail riding, it is important to have your feet under you so that the line of gravity falls through the base, thus making you more secure.

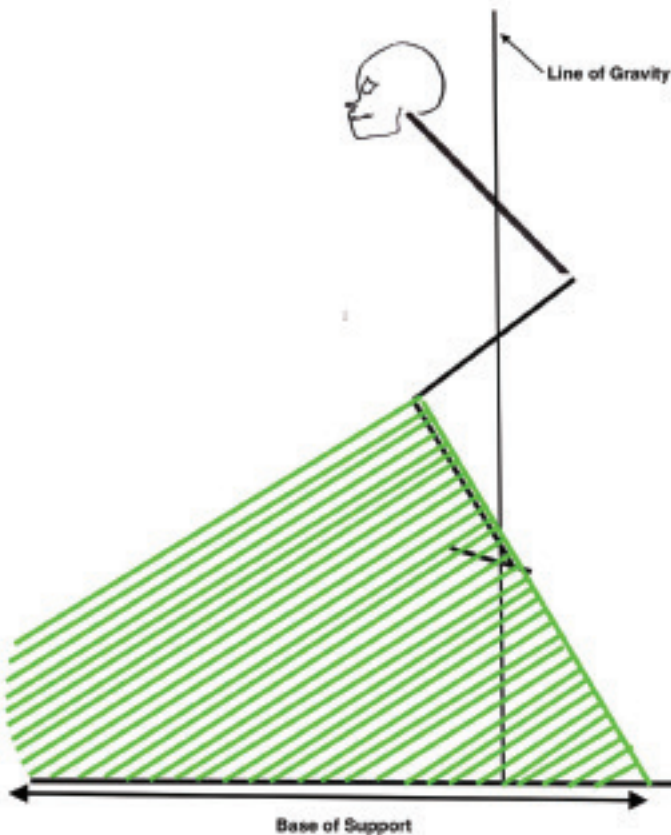


Figure 4. When jumping or going at speed such as combined training, steeplechases and racing, the rider needs to shorten the stirrups and angle the upper body forward while maintaining the center of gravity (COG) over the BOS. The shorter stirrups decrease angles in the hip, knee and ankle, which greatly increase in the base of support. The rider's stability is greatly increased provided the line of gravity falls through the base of support.



Figure 5. The lower leg has moved forward in an effort to get the heels down. The blue portion of the triangle represents that part which is behind the line of gravity. The lower leg moving forward has significantly decreased the rider's base of support. More importantly, most of the base is in front of the line of gravity, which makes the rider unstable. A reaction will be required in order to stay in balance with the movement of the horse.

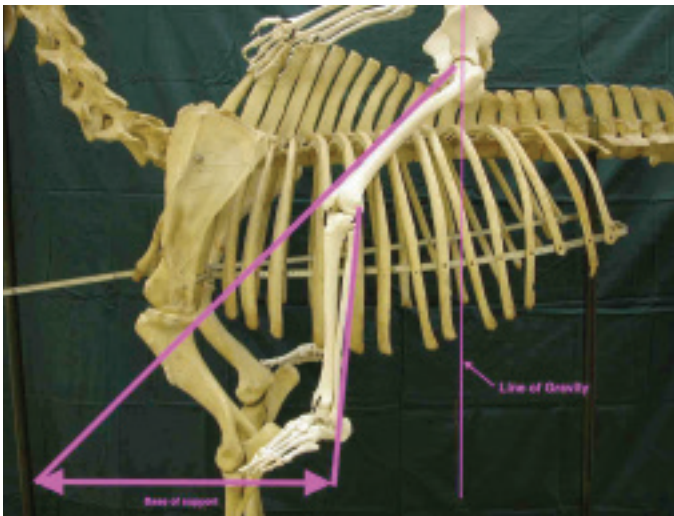


Figure 6. Without a saddle the rider's leg moves forward into the narrow rib area where the girth sits, thus moving the rider's base of support forward, well ahead of the line of gravity. One function of a saddle is to align the rider's legs under her so that the line of gravity travels through the BOS, thus greatly increasing the rider's stability.

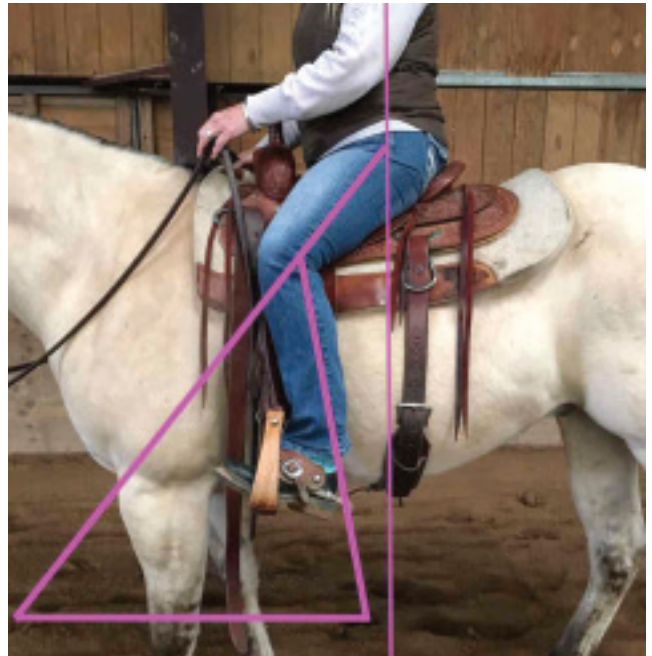


Figure 7. The rider's base of support is ahead of the line of gravity. The stirrup leather and fender are hanging straight down; therefore, this is most likely a saddle problem where the seat puts the rider too far back and/or the fenders are hung too far forward. The rider will have to react to any movement by the horse, most likely by leaning forward in order to have her COG over her BOS. This results in more weight on the horse's forehead, thus a less balanced horse.

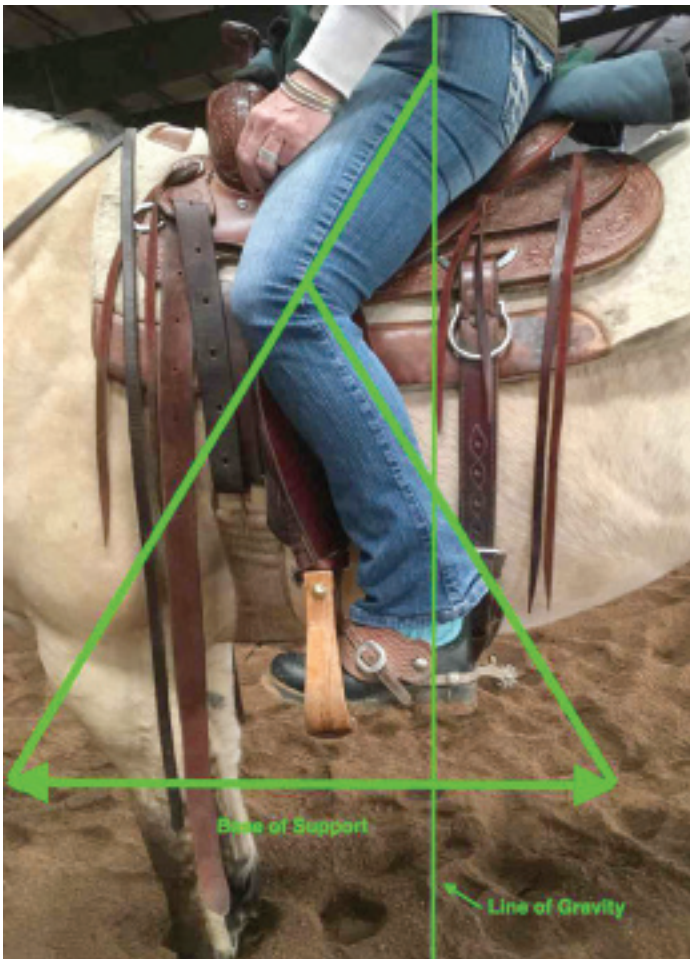


Figure 8. To solve this problem we have temporarily raised the rider up in the saddle with a folded saddle pad. This has narrowed the ground seat and moved the rider forward at the same time, thus placing her hip joint above her ankle. As a result, the BOS has increased in size and the line of gravity now passes through the BOS, making the rider more secure in the saddle.



Figure 9. A simple way to determine this is by using two sticks, in this case brooms. If they are long enough, they will also show you the size of the BOS on the ground. Place one along the line of the rider's thigh and the other along the line of the calf. If the triangle formed by these two lines is ahead of the line of gravity (ear, shoulder, hip and ankle) then the lower leg is too far forward. If the line passes through the triangle formed by the brooms, the rider will be more stable.



THOUGHTS AROUND THE ROUND PEN

By Tom Moates

When I began my horsemanship journey, one thing I noticed right away was that most everybody seemed to be using round pens. I figured there must be something pretty special about this particular kind of horse containment. Reflecting back now as a teacher and clinician of horsemanship for many years and a widely published author on the subject, I've got some thoughts to share about how the round pen is used.

Observing and working with horsemanship clinician Harry Whitney early on in my journey is what brought me to understand that all round-penning is not created equal. Comprehending the why of that fact can be hugely beneficial when working to gain a better relationship and communication with a horse.

Boiled down, the biggest hinge-point in horsemanship is whether or not a person gets through to a horse's mind and thereby gets a horse truly with her or him. The opposite of that is to get "mechanical" actions from a horse whereby the horse is not truly mentally with the person but is just going through, or being driven into, motions.

There is a huge difference between these two. To someone uninitiated with the idea of getting a horse truly mentally focused, round pen work might seem to look the same if done either way. There's a person in the middle of the round pen and the horse goes around her or him this way or that way. But when the nuances that are going on between a person and a horse in the round pen become apparent, the set up can provide a fabulous example of the difference between a horse being driven

into actions (or on auto pilot) and one who is following a feel presented by a person.

First, it might be worth noting that I discovered that there is no magic in the round pen itself. Yes, round pens are nice. I have one myself. They are very handy to work a horse in, particularly at liberty, where the horse has freedom to move around freely while remaining in close proximity to the person. But, I've found the very same is true of a square, rectangular, or some other not-so-accurately measured shape of corral. A horse will round out the corners in these not-round pens and they can work just as well as a round one.

Let's take one type of very common round pen work that provides a discernible example of the two approaches I am addressing. In videos, demos, clinics, and such where a horse is worked at liberty in a round pen, one of the most common things presented is a person in the middle of the pen with a horse running circles out by the panels. In this scenario, it often can be observed that the person is actively driving the horse around the pen. Then, the person lets off that pressure, steps back, and sucks the horse into a vacuum close to the person.

UNDERSTANDING TOOLS



It's a trick that typically works, and works fast. Many a person has wowed an audience with this maneuver, and I remember thinking how amazing this kind of thing seemed when I started out. I even did it some myself. But, this example doesn't represent what I am looking for in horsemanship these days. That is because of the reason behind why this method works and how the horse feels about being in this situation.

If a person sends a horse out on the rail to go, run, and be driven, the person makes it pretty miserable for the horse. Then when the person backs off the pressure, it sucks the horse in, but not because it feels good to be with the person, but rather because it feels so bad to be out there in flee mode running around. And, it's not lost on the horse that the person is the reason behind the ill feeling of being made to go run around the pen.

Plus, when we drive horses into circling us in a round pen, we are encouraging them to get away from us. If we stop and think about this, we can realize that we don't ever want our horses to feel like they need to get away from us. Surely we seek the opposite result and desire that our horses have no better place in the world than being right there with us. Yet I see this kind of round pen work demonstrated over and over again, often with the horse approaching the person with ears pinned and tail swishing, feeling all pinched up inside. But because a person got a clearly bothered, untethered horse to come and stand by him in a round pen in two minutes, it's thought to be quite wonderful and an example of skilled horsemanship.

Rather than setting it up so that running out there on the rail stinks, and coming to the person stinks, too, just a little less, there are alternatives. The round pen can be used as a means to allow the horse to search out for himself that things truly can be better with the person. This helps to build with-you-ness (as Harry would say) between the horse and person. The hope, then, is that this work helps to build a foundation that can carry good feelings and togetherness into other areas we'd like to go with our horses.

As with the above driving-the-horse scenario, the next example of round pen work involves a horse running around the pen out by the panels with a person in the center. This

certainly looks similar to what was happening in the previous example. The difference is that in our new example the person is not doing anything to make the horse run around. Quite the contrary.

If I'm the person in the pen in this example, I'll be working to get the horse's attention. I want to help him come to his own decision to stop running and think about coming to me rather than forcing it to happen. I do this by standing quietly in the center at first to see if by chance the horse will acknowledge me.

If the horse doesn't seem to take notice of me, then I will do something to interrupt his outward directed busy-ness. That something is often smacking my chap with the end of a lead rope to make a loud noise or whacking a flag on the ground. I will try to gauge this kind of overture to be big enough to be effective but not so big as to make things terribly worse. A dull horse might take a pretty big gesture, and a sensitive horse might take the slightest nudging. And I would probably try



doing whatever I do only once at first to see what happens. It is a way to say, "Hey horse...I'm standing over here in the pen with you. Why don't you quit all the running around, come over here, and try relaxing a bit?"

When a horse is troubled in a round pen and running along the panels, or perhaps even going back and forth by the gate or the side of the pen closest to the barn or his buddies, I learned from Harry to think of this as a horse's thought being outside of the pen. The horse wants to escape the confines of the pen, and you can almost see that the horse's brain has popped out of his head and bounced outside of the panels. His feet and physique are working hard to get his body over to where his brain is. So, when I make a kerwhack of some kind there in the middle of the round pen, this interrupts his thought of working hard to get out of the pen.



Notice in the first photo that Harry is standing in the center of the round corral quietly waiting while Linda Davenport's horse Sunshine runs circles around the pen. In the second photo, after some well-timed interruptions to Sunshine's mental away-ness, the mare has come to the conclusion that things aren't so bad with Harry after all.



A good kerwhack often will stop a horse's agitated fluster—at least for a moment. It becomes suddenly vitally important that he check out what is going on with the idiot in the middle of the pen. To accomplish this, the horse's brain needs to be recalled from over yonder and pop back into his head. And... it draws his attention to the person. Sometimes this will be the first break in the running around, and things can start to change for the better with the horse.

But, there are occasions when the horse may speed up and go harder at the first kerwhack or two. That harkens back to the first example. One may think they have witnessed me driving the horse around the pen, but that isn't what happened. Yes, I got active and the horse squirted harder around the pen. But, a kerwhack that is not directed at the horse is not the same in presentation as when a person drives a horse. One is done with intent at the horse, the other is not. A horse definitely senses the difference.

Eventually, even a horse intent on running away begins to look me up more and more. Almost always when given time and well-timed kerwhacks, a horse will end up making the choice to try coming in close to me and standing. I'll be the first to admit that this process takes longer than driving a horse to misery and then sucking him in. The results, however, are profoundly different and worth every effort.

To see a horse begin to search for something new in the

round pen because I intervened in his dilemma is a thrill. One can watch the wheels turn in his mind as he considers stopping, turning, facing me, and coming in close. And when a horse finally decides on his own to try coming to the middle of the pen to check me out and softens as I pet him when he does... there's nothing else like it. It is a singularly happy moment because it is not "mechanical," but rather results from establishing a positive relationship.

Once a horse begins to draw to and feel good about being with a person, the stage is set to begin directing the horse to try other things. Offer a feel, for instance, to see if the horse can take a couple of steps out around you close and then come back. Sometimes a horse remains dubious and needs to go out to the panels and run around some more. So what. Just let him go experience it. Remain the sweet spot in the pen and intervene enough to get him finding you again. He will work out for himself that running out there with his mind outside the pen doesn't feel nearly as good as being relaxed and still in the middle close to you.

The round pen certainly can be a helpful tool for setting up a good relationship with a horse. Rather than using it as a tool for forcing a horse to choose between a rock and a hard place, use it to allow a horse to search and feel like he came to his own conclusions, solved his own problems, and found a good friend right there close by.



CULTURE CLASH

By Ben Longwell



Above: Teaching at our Southern Bridle Horse School.
Below: Low-stress Stockmanship Clinic at Equidays.



It was something of a culture clash, you could say.

When I first immigrated to New Zealand in early 2011 and began starting colts, working with problem-solving cases and travelling the country teaching clinics, I couldn't find many Kiwis who knew anything about the vaquero culture or the making of a bridle horse. Most had never heard of such traditions or the gear that went along with it. If they had any experience with the terms, they thought "hackamore" referred to a mechanical hackamore and that "rawhide" was a TV show with Clint Eastwood. For many, the extent of their exposure to roping was watching the team roping at a small rodeo or a Hollywood western and referred to a lariat as a "lassoo."

I began intentionally including some time during my horsemanship clinics to speak of the history of the vaquero, the purposes behind the fine gear, the traditional progression of developing a whisper-reined bridle horse and the historical connection with the American Cowboy. For most folks, it was the first time they had heard of hair ropes, rawhide and spade bits. I would demonstrate with my gear, going over the details of quality, discussing the principles of signal and balance and outlining the process of taking a horse from the hackamore stage, through the two-rein phase, to straight up in the bridle. Slowly, there was interest growing and I would lend out my hackamore for folks to try with some instruction during clinics.

The summer of 2013/2014 brought some more positive changes as we were asked to host our first cattle working clinics and we met a lady beginning to learn how to make mecatés out of sheep wool. We also began importing the best, using gear we could find and spent a lot of time developing working relationships with makers and suppliers back in the States in order to provide quality western and vaquero-style tack. There was finally a small but growing market in New Zealand.

While teaching that year at Equidays, the national horse expo, I began to always make it a point to educate on some aspect of these traditions that are so foreign to the kiwi mind. It has been an amazing privilege to bring the history and skills to the national stage here for the first time—including demonstrations on ranch roping, the progression in developing a bridle horse, the hackamore, and the horsemanship of the vaquero. This has been invaluable in bringing a better understanding to the general equine industry and building a growing group interested in pursuing this style of horsemanship.



Teaching the first Vaquero Horsemanship Clinic at a national level in New Zealand.

In 2015, one of our longtime clinic hosts came to us with an idea of a passionate group of students dedicated to developing their own bridle horse—and so our Bridle Horse School was born. We started with a group of 7 riders from the North Island, one coming from nearly 7 hours away. Everyone was in the snaffle or hackamore and we began working on the basics of maneuverability and development of suppleness, balance and strength. Our next sessions involved working cows and introducing roping skills. Most had no experience in either field, but all were very interested in how each skill fits together in the practical life of a stockhorse. A year later, we were able to start a second group. Even though it's difficult for most students to find the time, the open country, and the cow work that is most conducive to developing a bridle horse, it has been exciting to see their progress. A few now are in the two-rein stage and have done some breakaway roping on live cattle.

With the gear we were importing and our horsemanship and cattle work clinics, we began to see a small but growing group of folks who could relate to each other and share their passion for this culture and history. We've helped administrate one of the largest Facebook groups dedicated to growing this community. Finally, in 2017, we partnered with the mecaté maker to produce the nation's very first Vaquero Gathering. This was a laid-back, 2-day event specifically geared to develop that sense of community, give folks a chance to learn and try new things, and grow the interest in these skills. Like our Bridle Horse Schools, it included some dry work and instruction in horsemanship, opportunity to work cows, and an introduction to roping. It was well attended and last year (2018) we sold out of rider spaces entirely!

It's pretty neat to look back and see the development of interest and passion for the culture of the vaquero in this country. It will never be the mainstream like the English disciplines are here and that's OK. It still feels like a culture clash when we go to the A&P Show (like a county fair) – blue jeans and Stetson in a sea of jodhpurs and helmets. But it's been a privilege to be a part of bringing these traditions across the Pacific and having a hand in helping folks and their horses discover a “new” way of doing things.



Benjamin Longwell grew up riding horses and working cattle, following in four and five generations of both sides of his family on the Western Slope of Colorado. After finishing school, he spent much of his time doing day work for ranches & outfits in the area, learning from the skills and experience of the ranchers. He also spent a year working as assistant trainer at Eagleview Quarter Horses in Loma, Colo., and learning the basics of colt starting and authentic horsemanship.

Having spent much of the next six years in the colt starting and horse training business, his knowledge and experience continued to expand. During this time both Ben and his wife, Natalie, worked on a 300,000-acre cattle and horse ranch in Wyoming, where Ben was also involved in conducting horsemanship clinics and demonstrations.

Ben has worked with some great horsemen in the West, adding to his natural gifting and lifetime of practical equine experience.

Ben and his wife, Natalie, had been living in America, but in early 2011 took the opportunity to build a training and clinic business in New Zealand, near Warkworth, just north of Auckland, working with interested parties and equine groups to provide quality Horsemanship.

Since being in New Zealand, Ben has been privileged to be a returning Clinician at Equidays (NZ's national horse expo www.equidays.co.nz) five different years, giving well-received clinics ranging from Colt Starting, Vaquero Horsemanship, Problem Solving to Green Horse Clinics. In the media, Ben has been written about in Horse & Pony Magazine, Rural Lifestyle and a number of local papers.

In 2014 Ben was invited to participate in New Zealand's first Kaimanawa Stallion Challenge - where trainers were randomly given a Kaimanawa Stallion straight from the wild and competed in 2 competitions at Equidays and Horse of the Year (HOY).

Ben teaches various Horsemanship Clinics around the country, and participants love his knowledgeable and quiet approach to teaching them, where leaving egos behind and focusing on the horse results in true progress and a great learning environment.



The Journey Begins

By Cosette Moormans

Ignorance may be bliss...that is, if it doesn't kill you.

This is the true story of how I survived my ignorance.

I've always believed it to be true, but I now know without a shadow of a doubt that miracles do still happen, because neither I nor anyone in my family seriously suffered for our naivete when we got our first equines. Not only are they potentially dangerous animals due to their physical size and power, but green mules acquired by even greener new owners are a recipe for disaster.

In retrospect, I am learning the value of the proverb: "Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety." When dealing with equines, the less you fall, the better! While I did do some research before acquiring mules, my headstrong, emotion-driven, self-taught wannabe approach is a picture of pretty much everything you don't want to do if you are considering pursuing an equestrian route.

Some people say that experience is the best teacher. I disagree. Although true to some extent, in some ways it's still too general a perspective. There are lots of things you don't want to experience and most importantly don't HAVE to experience, IF you are willing to learn from others who have gone before you—especially if you don't let your emotions lead you. Here follows some advice based on my experience:

- Don't have everyone in your family take the mules that you just saw for the first time for a "test drive." My mom almost rode off into the wild blue yonder because she accidentally kicked the hind side of the mule that had been previously abused with 2x4s and baseball bats.

- Don't try hand feeding them while they are standing loose in a field and imagine they won't mow you down.

- Don't leave a halter with a lead rope on your hard-to-catch critter 24/7 to make things slightly easier for you when you go to get him; that is, if you don't want him hung.

- And definitely don't start with getting a hard-to-touch, catch, lead, ride, and all-around difficult critter in the first place if you are not a seasoned equestrian. That is, assuming you value your life at least a little bit.

- And above all else, (did I say this already?) don't let your emotions lead you.

If, however, you are a glutton for punishment, you could always take the route I took. I just can't guarantee it will turn out as miraculously fortunate as it did for me.



The first day Cosette and her family saw the mules. The start of a horsemanship journey.



First evening on our homestead.



Learning together on our first trail ride.

I'd been begging my parents since toddler-hood for a horse, and contrary to how it seems given what I have already shared, we did do a good deal of research before buying. We read a lot, asked questions and finally concluded that mules were better suited to our land and our needs. I'm not sure what exactly led me to choose my first two mules - but I'll venture to guess it was my emotions. We even travelled out of state to buy them and upon arrival learned that just a few weeks before, they had been sold from, of all places, our own town's auction. I gave them the romanticized names Mythril and Gimli to match the idealistic perspective I had at the time about my new critters. At sixteen the obsession had outlasted most other short-lived whimsies, so I didn't really care if their ears were ginormous; or not, in fact, I liked them that way. My dream had finally come true.

Reality set in as within seconds of Mythril coming off the trailer onto our land, I was being semi-dragged and getting severe rope burn on ungloved hands. That definitely wasn't a part of my dream. His dream of a contented life didn't seem to involve people anymore. Still, I had a penchant for underdogs and determined it was something a little TLC could clear up. My aspirations with Mythril matched the meaning of his name, a durable metal also known as "true silver." I was not going to give up on him.

It took a few weeks for it to sink in, but the evidence was all there the first day: the mules did not feel the same way about me as I did about them. Mythril had no interest beyond grazing and eyeing me suspiciously from a distance. Gimli was only interested in having his ears rubbed and his belly filled with treats.

I was somewhat discouraged, but it never really occurred to me that any of the roadblocks I'd stumbled on might be insurmountable. My parents encouraged me to study under Audrey Boone, the local equestrian trainer who had originally pointed us towards and educated us about mules. In exchange for work hours, she happily shared all she knew. She'd been introduced to vaquero horsemanship and subsequently to Buck Brannaman

and his contemporaries during her time working at the Grand Canyon. I knew I needed help, but I was still blissfully unaware of the extent of my ignorance. Working with Audrey showed me how much I didn't know what I didn't know. The first year, I fumbled my way from lesson to lesson. I believe I benefitted the most from our arrangement and can only hope that I haven't caused Audrey to age before her time. ;) She is a great mentor, but has also become a dear friend, something for which I remain deeply grateful.

The support and patience of my parents was a constant in the midst of all these self-inflicted challenges. They instilled in me the confidence to learn from mistakes and—while sobered by them—not to be shaken by them. I had their guidance to fall back on as I worked my way towards a more mature perspective and approach.

Eventually, the art of horsemanship began to work its way into my life, fundamentally changing my perspective on how these animals can change our lives. When working in concert, the transformation in both horse and horseman can seem magical, but the reality is far deeper and more raw than the romanticized portrait that is so persistent today. Despite my youth, I have become painfully aware that most people are resistant to change. Yet if we will allow working with an animal to change us, the results can be miraculous. Such work with equines requires us to be minutely sensitive and aware, to adjust, and to step out of comfort zones. Perhaps most importantly, I have experienced the importance of humble, genuine listening and observing. That's when real learning can take place and that's when horizons expand. It is my opinion, that in our technology-centered and -saturated culture, most of us are missing out on one of the most obvious ways our Creator is revealing Himself to us—namely, through His creation.

Though steady, our progress seemed excruciatingly slow during those first two years. I had thought that by then surely, I would be exploring our land on mule-back and putting them



Working on the forward while riding out.

SHARING OUR STORIES



to work. Though we were making quality progress as we rebuilt his (and my) confidence and experience, Mythril continued to be ear shy and still wasn't leadable outside of a small paddock. The process proved a perfect way to teach me patience and a healthy understanding of the mental commitment needed to become a true "horseman." I distinctly remembered hearing successful equestrians equate their education to the process of progressing from pre-school through high school. The time and effort involved in all those years of education was instrumental in re-shaping my approach to learning equestrianism. It wasn't going to be quick or easy, but rather would require dedication, persistence, patience and the humble determination to keep learning from others and from the equines. It was clear that this was going to be a long-term and broader pursuit than I had initially realized. It was not something I could arrive at and consider done. Rather I had to have peace that this was going to be a lifelong process.

Hungry to learn more intensely, I approached Audrey about interning with her, living on her land and shadowing her throughout her day. I wanted to glean as much from her as I could. During those months, we spent lots of time in the round pen with Mythril, equipped with Mr. Brannaman's red book of groundwork and a rope, halter and saddle. We did lots of experimenting. Audrey walked me through exercises like changing eyes, hooking on, moving the hindquarters and directing the feet. She tried to have me work at it as much as possible, sorting things out and coaching me through it. This time really exposed my lack of confidence. If I heard it once, I heard it a million times: "Don't tiptoe around him (Mythril), work with confidence." I especially struggled with the notion of exposure for preparation. I was so afraid to overexpose him that on my own I was largely ineffective. "Controlled careless" was a phrase Audrey came up with to help me think of how I needed to work through exposure situations. It's a phrase that constantly comes to mind even though it's an ongoing challenge to apply it. Anything that we could think of to do from the ground we did. The possibilities seemed limitless.

During this time, she told me about the Legacy of Legends scholarship program and encouraged me to apply. I spent the winter preparing my application. After doing some research and watching videos of former applicants, all of them much more skilled and experienced than me, I was tempted to give up. If my family had known that this would lead to almost a year of hair-raising stories away from home, perhaps they would have allowed me to give in to my doubt. Fortunately for me, they didn't. Instead, they encouraged me to try harder and do more because often effort and persistence trump everything else in making a dream come true.

So, I started putting material together. Audrey videoed a lot of the work we did together in the round pen and while riding



Building confidence in each other from the ground up.

together. My mom also burned many calories running around our land trying to get the perfect shots of me working with the mules. It was a team effort with my mom filming, my dad teaching me about video editing and everyone critiquing the required personal essay. (My sisters provided moral support and comic relief.)

That winter Audrey and I continued to get together to work with the mules and on my horsemanship. Then, one ill-fated day, while sorting cattle on foot with Audrey and her husband, Josh, I lost my phone, which held almost all the many months of videos. Oh, the many hours spent searching and pinging that phone at all hours of the day and night, only to conclude that it was hopelessly lost under miles of muck and manure. Not to be easily deterred, we took more video in the coldest months, did more editing and finally sent the application off shortly after the New Year.

And then came the waiting. I've never been much good at that.

Several months later, exceeding my most hopeful dreams, I found out that I was awarded one of the 2018 scholarships. My mentor would be Mindy Bower and I would head to Uh Oh Ranch in Colorado to start working with her in late spring. I was incredibly excited—and still pinching myself in utter disbelief—when I learned that I could also bring my mules with me if I could find a way to transport them. In retrospect, my plan to haul my two largely green mules cross-country (particularly as I had almost no experience hauling a trailer) was nonsensical, but I was bound and determined to make it happen.

Audrey offered to drive the almost 1500 miles with me to haul the trailer while I did my best to be moral support from the passenger seat. I supplied mints, music, stories and the occasional high-energy drink to keep our spirits up and our trip progressing. Our two-day trip turned into three days with an overnight at a truck stop because of unexplainable trailer brake and light failure. Nothing went as planned. The trip seemed a harbinger of the challenges that would soon greet me.

But I was ecstatic. We had finally arrived at Uh Oh Ranch, and I had so much to look forward to.

Editor's Note: Learn more about Cosette's adventures in Colorado in the next issue.



POWER IN THE DETAILS

Readiness: Metaphor #2

By Connie Crawford

At a Harry Whitney clinic at Mendin' Fences in Tennessee, I was tacking up my horse. He was standing stock-still, which was unusual for him. I was humming to myself, thinking, "Oh this is going really well." I thought Harry was fully occupied talking to other clients, but, in his inimitable way, he was simultaneously observing me. I blithely continued preparing my horse, imagining how good my session was going to be. Harry quietly came over and asked me, "Is he with you?" I was rather miffed at being interrupted during my excellent tacking up but I trust Harry, so I asked my horse to look at me.

Nothing.

I asked my horse to move his hind feet.

Two second pause. Slow, minimal movement of hind feet.

My horse was with me physically but not with me mentally.

My horse was NOT ready.

"Drat you, Harry Whitney!" I thought selfishly. Part of me wanted to remain in the stock-still fantasy that my horse was truly calm. My thoughts were all about lifting my saddle or reaching for the hoof pick, not about my horse's readiness. Harry reminded me how vital it is to note these little moments of un-readiness. If my horse was zoned out and something woke him up, he might bolt. I would then wonder, as many people do, "Where did that come from?" So I moved past my fantasy and thanked Harry for bringing me back to my horse's reality.

Harry Whitney uses metaphors and images to help his clients. These mental tools supplement my flash experiences of readiness. Being accustomed to riding brace and reluctance, I have mostly felt friction-free readiness in flashes: when my horse spins toward home or toward his herd. Those moments



are great opportunities to get the feel of what holistic readiness feels like, but they are too rare. Harry's metaphors help me understand how little it can weigh when a horse does something they want to do.

Think of a puck in an air hockey game, he suggests. The puck floats on air, slides smoothly and freely. It can move any direction at any given moment.

Harry also uses a metaphor one of his clients told him. The client called it the "slippery saucer feeling." Take a saucer out of the dishwasher and set it down on a wet, smooth counter. The saucer slides and glides smoothly, freely. (Note: Do not do this with your Great-Grandmother's china.)

"We used to use the words heavy, resistance, dull and on the muscle" to describe the feeling of a horse who is not ready, Harry remarks. "Un-readiness is the horse's body caught between our mind and their mind... When we humans are doing a job we don't even think about the movement of our feet. When we need to, we move in any direction at any time. We are doing a job and there is no effort. It just happens. Our mind is trying to get the job done. When a horse's mind is willing and available it is no different than when our own mind is engaged. The body just follows."

By continually reminding myself that keeping the horse's mind aligned with my intentions, I keep him (and me) ready. I may not have many physical experiences of this alignment, but metaphors can help me search for it. I must be ready always to keep the saucer sliding, the puck floating and my horse's mind and body with me.





Helmets & Horsemanship

By Sue Chiverton

*From an old lady horse obsessive ...
some thoughts on riding safety and being in the moment.*

OK, you made it past the title. If you keep going, I promise it won't be too boring and I won't preach. Just sharing some thoughts...really.

About six weeks ago, I had a self-induced fall from my horse. He was just being his regular, good guy self, keeping his eye on things, and I was being a distracted dope and, at the point that, for some unknown reason, he went slightly one way, I went the other and hit the ground hard. Luckily, for me, I was riding with a friend who made sure that I wasn't dead, dusted me off, collected my horse, and walked with me the short distance to my place. I was a little sore and rattled, but not too bad, it seemed, at that moment.

Let me set the stage—I've always been a horse freak, starting out as a little girl in the English riding world in the Northeast with puffy jodhpurs and a black velvet hat. When I finally was moving into the middle age thing, I bought my first horse and set about doing loads of trail riding in the beautiful country of northern California. I was a pretty big chicken, but I had some good, modest adventures with my trail riding gal pals. There was no "outfit," so to speak, just comfortable riding clothes and a helmet that looked like a thick white plastic mixing bowl. From trail riding, I moved to jumping, sort of terrifying for a non-thrill seeker like me, and then toward dressage, which I had no clue about, but, as most of the feet were on the ground most of the time, it seemed safe. Trail riding was still the main fun activity. The beach, the redwoods, all just about perfect. The white helmet was still with me.

Somewhere along the line I got tempted into the cow horse world. I had done a lot of horsemanship clinics and started to aspire to the Californio style of horsemanship. I got a nice quarter horse, joined a bridle horse project and became immersed in some really great stuff with a load of fun people. One of the very important by-products of this new phase was that I got brave. There was something about the cow work that seemed so important to focus on and get the job done right, that being a wimp had to be put to the side. I will

be forever grateful to this part of my horse life for that reason. It gave me confidence and, I think, finally made me a real rider.

But "the look" was different and the white plastic helmet was easily put aside for a flat hat. I was totally sucked into the gear, clothing and tack, all which seemed like art to me, completely seductive. Dressing the part seemed to be the logical way to go. In a strange way, it helped with the confidence thing. After all, if you look the part, once you get moving, you want to do it right. Wearing a helmet with my very cool shotgun chaps never even entered my mind.



Over time, my passion moved to classical dressage. The QH needed a real job and moved on to a place where cow work was his daily life. For me, my herd became three very nice Iberians, and I have developed an unbreakable habit of going to Portugal once a year to ride Lusitano schoolmasters. The cow horse thing made me a confident rider and, now, I began to feel that I moved to a new level. Riding these fantastic, incredibly athletic Lusitanos takes focus and skill. And I'm even doing some of it on my guys at home.

The helmet thing... sometimes on, sometimes not. I'm not really sure what would make me decide to wear it sometimes and not others. I didn't always wear it when riding in Portugal, not a particularly smart decision since I travel there alone and didn't really want to end up in a Portuguese hospital all by myself. Not that the horses are a danger, but they are dang athletic!

Fast forward to six weeks ago and my involuntary dismount. One important thing to know is that I live very rurally and ride by myself most of the time. It was a bit daunting and lonely in the beginning, but now I really enjoy it. It's quiet, I school my horses on the trails and, most importantly, I focus and I ride every stride and stay in the middle of my horse. This particular day, though, I was enjoying the company of my



friend, and we were trotting across a grassy meadow on a loose rein, with me, a bit in front. Being really dumb, I was talking to her over my right shoulder as we were going along. My very attentive and very athletic Lusitano saw something and moved left. Me, probably on the upbeat of the trot, went immediately right, hitting the ground hard. I was wearing my helmet, but my friend is pretty sure from my complete stillness, that I was out for at least a few seconds. I hit on the back of my rib cage and, although I was pretty sure nothing was broken, I was pretty beat up and it was a good six weeks before I was feeling OK. Also, I'm sort of getting old, 67. Still spry, but the bounce has gone out of the old body, so it's more of a thud when it hits. It was a grassy meadow, no rocks, but a hard fall... and a lot of food for thought.

Helmets are becoming more and more a part of equestrian riding apparel these days, even moving into the western world. Why do some people wear them and some not? Who knows, but it's all a personal decision, unless you're riding someplace that requires them... something more prevalent these days in the horse world and with all of the liability issues in this country. For me, my place is perfect for an obsessive horse life, great facility with perfect riding into a national forest right out the back gate, and I want to keep enjoying it for years and years. If the helmet looks silly, no one sees me anyway, so who cares?

Looking back, I think that the helmet question was tied into feeling competent or not, along with a bit of arrogance, "I'm a good rider, I'm not going to fall off" and, of course, the vanity thing and the resulting "helmet head." I've decided to be done with all of that and I will wear my helmet every time I get on. That's my choice and I'm sticking to it! And it's the only fair thing for my husband and the possibility of him caring for me after an unscheduled dismount that goes wrong.

One more thing, if you've made it this far, my wreck was really not about the helmet issue. That was just an important sidebar. What it really was about was not being in the moment, not riding every stride, multi-tasking, being social, yacking away while trotting along on a super athletic horse, who is always on the lookout for something, bless his heart. It was pretty much of a non-event. He didn't buck, or do a giant spook, just a small jump off to the side. BUT, of course, I came off when he sidestepped a bit... I was off balance and just did not go with him. It was just centrifugal force and gravity, nothing to do with skill in that moment. All of it was my issue and easily could have been avoided, but we all have lapses and things just happen, and usually when we least expect them.

I love the meditative part of riding and let that fall by the wayside by my own disregard for being attentive to the moment and my horse. Being one with your horse is part of being safe, but it also is the most important part of our relationship with these wonderful creatures that actually "let" us ride them. And the helmet thing, that's my choice and now I've pretty much convinced myself that it's the cool thing to do...at least for me!



SADDLING PART 3: THE ANATOMY OF SADDLE FIT

By Deb Bennett, Ph.D.

PREFACE

Before beginning, I want to acknowledge the fine saddle craftsmanship consistently seen in the pages of *The Eclectic Horseman*. I don't want anyone to think, when I complain about badly designed saddles—and the scare tactics that are sometimes used to sell them—that I am talking about saddlemakers featured here. In fact, I am sure that many who contribute to this magazine will read this article with a sense of relief, because it brings together a lot of information. My intention is to clear up confusions; I hope that saddlemakers will want to hand out copies as a way of educating customers.

WHAT IS A SADDLE?

Always a fan of rational communication, I'm usually the first to ask students to use words as the dictionary defines them, but I make an exception in the case of "saddle." The Oxford dictionary says merely that a saddle is "a seat fastened on the back of a horse"; Merriam-Webster adds that it must be girthed. But these definitions would equally cover a cloth saddle-pad—or for that matter, any throne-like object that could be strapped on a horse's back, such as a porta-potty or a folding camp-chair.

Let me suggest that to be a saddle, the object in question must have an internal skeleton, called a tree. (In previous installments, we have looked at different historical forms of saddle tree; see issues #103 and #104.) The "bones" of a saddle tree are its bars and arches (Fig. 1).

The tree exists to provide a gullet or channel which prevents any part of the saddle itself, or the rider's body, from touching the skin overlying the dorsal processes of the horse's spine. It must be sufficiently strong and stiff that clearance is not lost when pressure is applied to it. The tree should neither collapse to the center nor bridge (see Fig. 2). Note that this does not say that the tree must be absolutely rigid—it can have some flex, just not too much.

The tree must be sufficiently strong and stiff to provide stable anchorage for stirrups, rigging/girth, and other saddle parts. It needs to be substantial enough that a seat can be constructed upon its upper surface(s). The upper surface of the tree is the "rider-conforming surface." The undersurface of the tree constitutes the "horse-conforming surface." It must be shaped so as to match the curves and contours of the horse's back while building in some extra room for movement of the shoulders in front and the loins in back. The bars should be as wide as practicable (Figs. 3, 4). The main aim of saddle design should be to provide comfortable fit for the horse during movement.

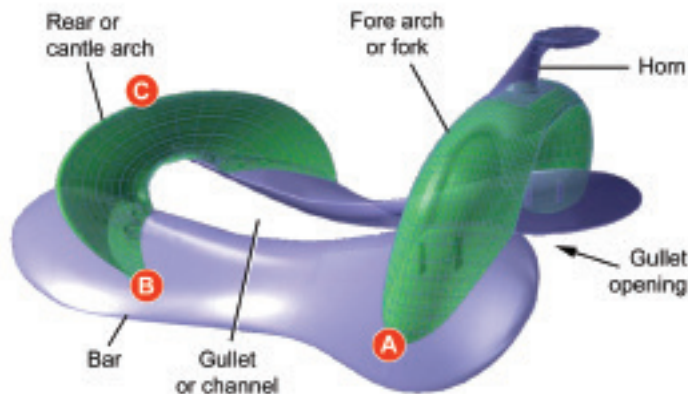


Fig. 1: Computer-generated 3D image of a saddle tree. The "twist" is the zone behind the fore arch where the bars change from being more vertical in orientation to more horizontal. Women often find a narrow twist most comfortable, a wide twist very uncomfortable. Best way to measure length of the seat is not from top of fork to point C, but from point A to point B. This dimension is the thigh opening which will often need to be bigger for women (image courtesy Dave Genadek).

It is crucial to the welfare of your horse that the thing you ride in provides, at all times, gullet space to clear his vertebral spines. In order to do this, the saddle tree must have bars. Fig. 5 shows an Argentinian Gaucho saddle, a traditional and highly functional design that lacks arches but has bars that maintain gullet clearance. By contrast, saddles advertised in the U.S. as "treeless" commonly have arches (i.e. pommel/fork and cantle), but either no bars or bars that are so soft and flexible that they can deform, losing gullet clearance (Fig. 2B). If the gullet space disappears when a given saddle has been girthed down and the rider is sitting in it, no matter how thickly it may be padded or stuffed, it's really no more than a glorified saddle pad.

More than six thousand years ago, when people first discovered how to tame horses and ride them, they used saddle pads. Saddles (with trees) were developed much later, about 700 B.C. Saddles with trees replaced treeless saddle pads for a reason: they function better for both rider and horse. It is absolutely true that a badly designed, badly placed, badly fitted, or badly ridden saddle will cause horrible problems, but this is not the fault of the tree; it's because whoever put that saddle on the horse did not know how to choose one that would fit properly, or how to place it, girth it, and ride in it.

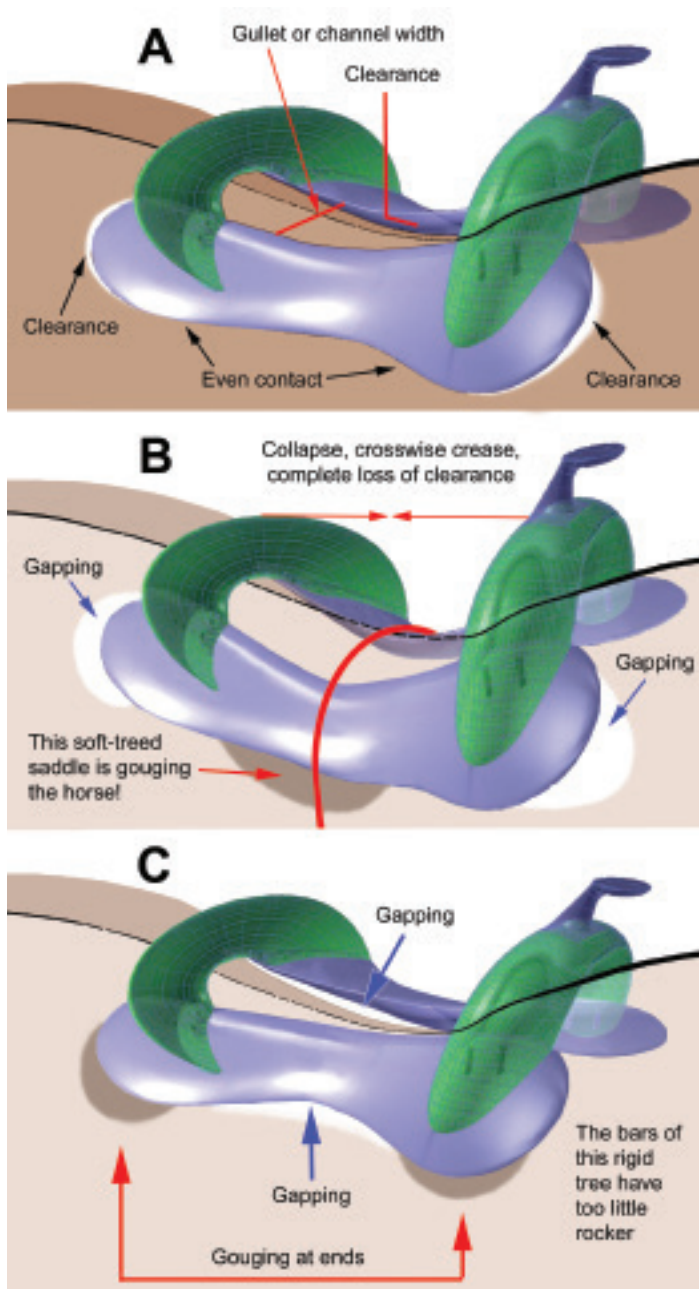


Fig. 2: How the saddle tree fits on the horse's body. **A**, good fit, rigid bars; the shape of the horse's back matches that of the underside of the saddle, with some clearance at both ends. **B**, so-called "treeless" saddles with bars that are too soft (or no bars at all) will collapse toward the center. **C**, rigid bars with too little rocker will "bridge," digging in at either end and gapping under the center. Bridging, which can occur in both "English" and "Western" saddles, is the single most common saddle-fit problem.

The reasons we use saddles (with sufficiently stiff trees) can be summed up by the "three Ss":

1. **To protect the horse's spine.** The rider sits over the horse's rib cage, and each thoracic dorsal process is capped by a bursa (orange color in Fig. 9). Bursae are fluid-filled cartilaginous pads which, if they come under pressure or concussion, are prone to becoming painfully inflamed—after which they are notoriously slow to heal. Gullet/channel clearance prevents trauma to the bursae.

2. **For safety.** Since the very beginning, riders have pre-

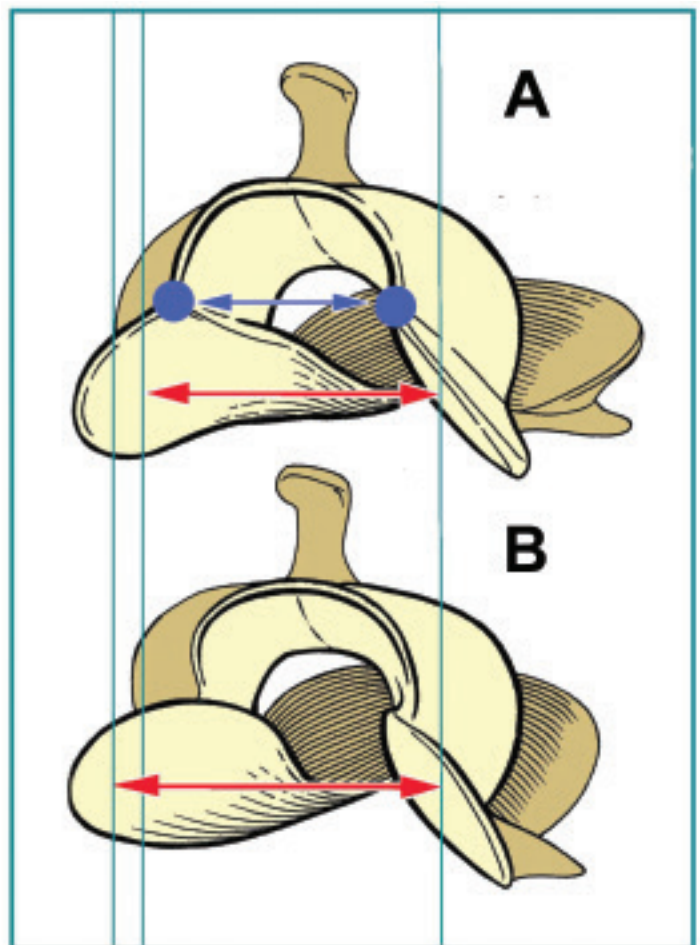


Fig. 3: Trees of type **A**, in which there is little flare at the front of the bars, are usual in mass-manufactured "Western" saddles. Tree type **B** has much more flare, which gives room for the horse's shoulders to move. Blue line shows how gullet width and/or saddle "size" or "width" is commonly measured. Measuring along the red line will be much more helpful in fitting your horse.

ferred horses with higher withers and ancient peoples tried to breed for this conformation. Higher withers help the bareback/saddle-pad rider to stay on, but only when a properly designed and fitted saddle is used does the rider become truly secure. When the rider's seat becomes stable, his hands also can become quiet, opening the gateway to refined performance.

3. **So that stirrups can be used.** Even when the horse has prominent withers, a saddle pad can easily roll off to one side. For this reason, stirrups are dangerous when attached to anything girthed to a horse's back that does not have a tree.

With a saddle pad or so-called "treeless saddle," weight in the stirrups will sooner or later cause the loss of gullet clearance. The sign of this is that the seat collapses to the center and creases across the middle (Fig. 2B). Anything, including not only the stirrup leathers but even a saddle blanket that gets pulled tight in a band across the horse's back just behind the withers, will make the animal's back sore.

By contrast, when stirrup leathers are attached to a saddle tree (Fig. 7), whatever weight the rider puts in the stirrups is transferred to the whole tree. Only when stirrups are attached to a tree can they provide maximum stability to the rider. In old times this was the main factor enabling knights to couch the



BOGUS IDEAS IN HORSEMANSHIP

lance, and was important for mounted swordsmen and saber-wielding cavalrymen too. Today stirrups continue to help riders to use tools such as the garrocha (cattle pole) or lasso. They assist posting, jumping, enduro riding, and all forms of police and ranch work.

THE HORSE'S ANATOMY

In order to get a good grasp of saddle fit, horse owners need to know some details about three kinds of anatomy: the horse's, the rider's, and the saddle's. Anatomy is form, and function follows form.

The saddle goes on the freespan of the horse's back, which is structured by vertebrae and ribs, covered by layers of muscle, and supported by the animal's four legs. Study the illustration provided to get a sense of how all the anatomical layers relate to each other (Fig. 11).

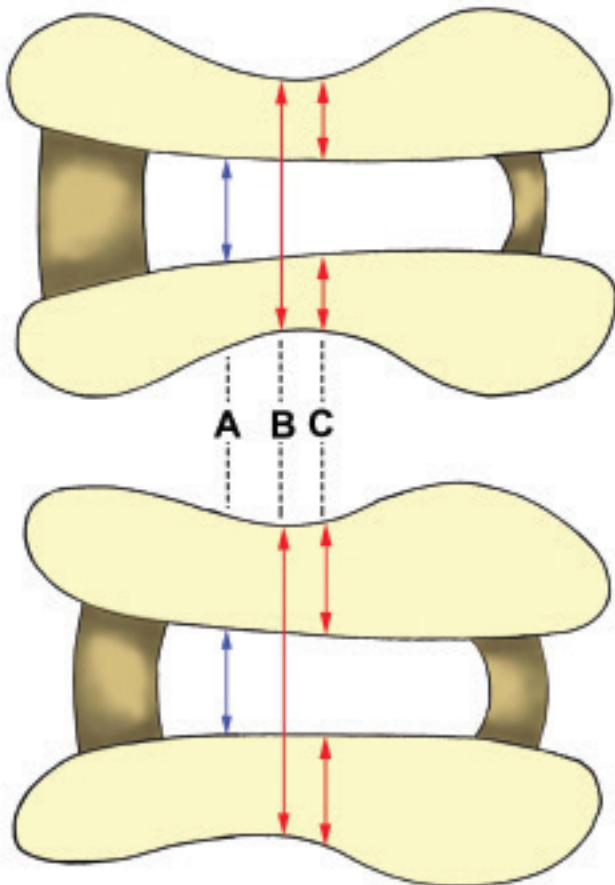


Fig. 4: The underside or horse-conforming surface of two "Western" saddle trees; fore-arch to right. Above, tree with narrow bars commonly found in mass-manufactured saddles. Below, a much better-designed tree. Blue line **A** shows "spread" or distance between left and right bar; red line **B** shows the span of the tree (how much of the rib cage it covers); red line **C** shows width of bars under center of saddle.

When properly placed upon a horse's back, the fore-arch of the saddle rests upon the thoracic trapezius muscle and the thoracic rhomboideus muscle which lies just beneath it. Since these muscles attach to the shoulder blades on left and right sides of the body, it is very important that the saddle tree is shaped to allow room for the back-and-forth movement that the shoulder blade makes with every step that the horse takes. One way to do this is to build enough rocker and flare into a rigid saddle tree (Fig. 3); another is to make the bars flexible (Fig. 5); a third way is to cut out the front of the bars (Fig. 6).

The rear or cantle arch of the saddle rests upon a completely different muscle, the longissimus dorsi—the single largest muscle in the horse's body. Left and right longissimus dorsi originate upon the pelvis and sacrum and lie upon the long "shelf" formed by the transverse processes of the lumbar vertebrae and the flattened upper surfaces of the successive ribs (Figs. 10, 11). The longissimus dorsi muscles are very thick, completely filling the L-shaped space between the horizontal "shelf" and the vertical "wall" formed by the row of dorsal spines.

The fibers of the longissimus dorsi attach multiple times to every lumbar and thoracic vertebra and also, via forked anterior extensions (the spinalis and semispinalis branches), to the three or four lowest neck vertebrae. They also attach to all but the first pair of ribs. In total, contractions of the pair of longissimus dorsi directly affect at least 64 separate bones and over 100 joints, far more than can be found in any of the horse's limbs—or all of them put together! Their function is to regulate the elastic oscillations of the horse's spine—both the up-and-down oscillations which occur during running and in collection, and the side-to-side oscillations which are known as lateral bending. The horse's spine can also rotate a little, and this constitutes the third dimension of spinal function. Whenever a horse takes a step, before he can pick up his foot to begin, he must flex his spine in all three of these dimensions and it is primarily the longissimus dorsi muscle which produces these flexions.

If the cantle arch of the saddle does not properly fit the horse—if it has any tendency to dig into the longissimus dorsi—the horse's ability to perform anything, whether that be to go forward at any gait, stop, turn, jump, or perform lateral movements, will be compromised. So will his long-term soundness, for limb function is intimately connected with spinal function. For lack of space here, I cannot cover all that this implies, so I suggest the reader do a bit of homework by downloading a trio of free .pdf documents (go to www.equinestudies.org, click on "Knowledge Base," and then click on "Lessons from Woody," "True Collection," and "The Ring of Muscles Revisited").

While we're at it, let's dispense with a confusion which I believe got started when someone at a horse expo heard me speaking about the anticlinal vertebra. In a normal horse the chain of lumbar and thoracic vertebrae which comprise the freespan of the back form a long arch. The "anticlinal" vertebra

is the one positioned at the highest point of that arch; in the horse, it is normally T16 (Fig. 9). Somehow, this got muddled up with the center of gravity which in the average standing horse lies below T8. Maybe somebody was trying for a compromise, so that pretty soon I was hearing some saddle vendors tell customers that their product was designed around “the anticlinal vertebra at T14.”

This is doubly an error. First, the center of gravity concept, which derives from physics, is inapplicable—totally bogus—when applied to riding, the analysis of equine motion, and saddle fitting (for complete mythbusting on this topic, see *The Eclectic Horseman* July/August 2017 issue, No. 96). And second, the anticlinal vertebra lies several inches behind the position of the center of the seat in any properly made and fitted saddle.

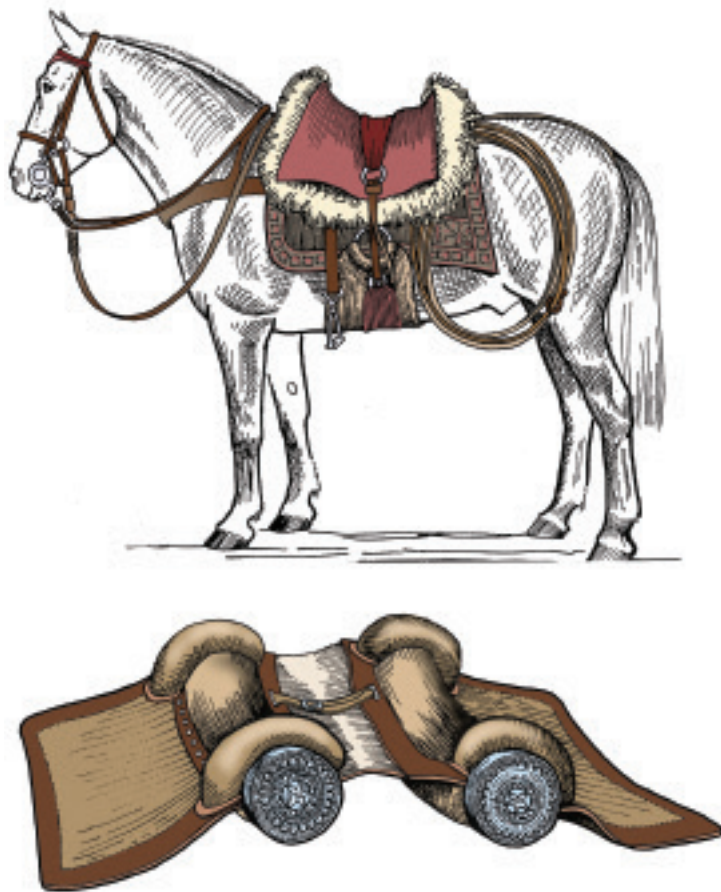


Fig. 5: Classic Argentinian Gaucho saddle (on the horse, above; tree construction, below). The bars are stuffed leather tubes, the ends capped with heavy silver; there are no arches. Gullet clearance is maintained by firm stuffing, tubes of sufficient diameter, and by adjusting the spread between the bars. The saddling concept is multi-layered: first a woolen blanket (not visible) over which goes the tooled leather sheet. These are cinched on center-fire with a very wide girth designed to lie behind the horse’s sternum. Then the saddle tree goes on, topped with one or more sheepskins and finally, atop that, a colorful (often embroidered) saddle-cloth. These are held on with the darker-colored overgirth. This design has been effectively used on the Argentinian pampas for five centuries.

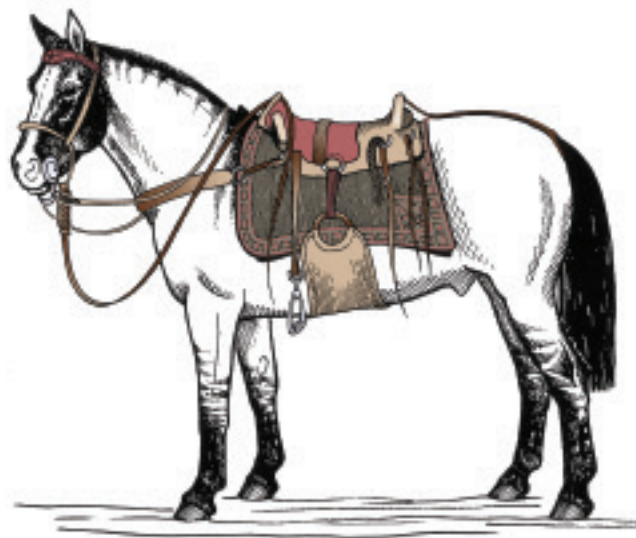


Fig. 6: Gauchos of the northeastern corner of Argentina, Uruguay, and southeastern Brazil use this type of saddle built on a rigid tree. Note centerfire rigging, wide girth, and placement of girth behind the horse’s sternum. This design addresses the shoulder-movement problem by cutting the front of the bars completely out. The system works partly because the girth is centerfire, but the tree must also be carefully selected and fitted.

THE RIDER’S ANATOMY

The first author who caused Americans to realize that human anatomy and biomechanics is important to good riding was Sally Swift in her 1985 book *Centered Riding*. Her teaching inspired me to address a related topic—differences between the anatomy and functioning of men vs. women in the saddle. This prizewinning research (first published in 1986) continues to be available for you to study as a free downloadable .pdf (go to www.equinestudies.org, click on “Knowledge Base”, and then click the button with the article title.)

Once again I can’t go into all the details here, but for quick reference I reproduce men’s vs. women’s pelvic and lower back anatomy in Figs. 12, 13, 14. Not to make a horrible pun, the “bottom” line is that they are quite different. Since until recent times almost all saddles meant to be ridden astride were designed for men, this highlights a huge area of need for saddles designed to be functional and comfortable for women.

Unfortunately, there are very few saddles on the market—whether made in Europe, Australia, or America—that have been designed with an understanding of women’s anatomy in mind. The saddle may bear a woman’s name, but in almost every case the woman—usually a winning competitor—has merely been paid to endorse a model that the manufacturer had already been marketing for years under another name, and which in some cases had previously been endorsed by a male winning competitor. These are “women’s saddles” in name only. If you’re a woman, you must learn to understand what you’re seeing in terms of the shape of any given saddle, and you certainly must do more to try out any saddle you’re considering for purchase than merely sit in it on a stand at the horse expo or in the showroom. No one—man or woman—should buy a mass-manufactured saddle from a company that will not permit you to try



their model on your horse before you buy. If you choose to go with a custom-made saddle, you will pay more, but the saddlemaker will almost always turn him- or herself inside out to make sure it fits both you and your horse.

SADDLE ENGINEERING

Twenty years ago, saddlemaker Dave Genadek produced a quality one-hour DVD program entitled “About Saddle Fit.” Dave sells it at cost for \$25 and I highly recommend it (obtain your copy by going to www.aboutthehorse.com). This is not a sly attempt to sell you a saddle made by Dave; nowhere on the tape, not even in the end credits, does he mention the name of his company or even take credit for the beautifully made “Black Rhino” model which is used in the program as an example of good design. The sole purpose is to empower you as a consumer by explaining the principles of saddle design and fitting.

Dave teaches that designing a saddle can usefully be thought of as an engineering project, like building a bridge. The same kind of analytical thinking ought to go into both. Engineers think of bridges as systems which are composed of subsystems, each of which affects the whole. An engineer will test each subsystem separately until she understands its properties, and then will test the whole system once all components have been connected together. With saddling, the last “subcomponent” is the horse itself—and as we know, all horses are different! Dave’s video allows you to view how differently shaped trees function on different horses’ backs. Briefly, the subsystems of a saddle are the tree (Fig. 2); the rigging (Fig. 7); the seat (Figs. 1, 7, 8); the stirrups (Fig. 8); the skirts, fenders, or panels; and the stuffing or fleece.

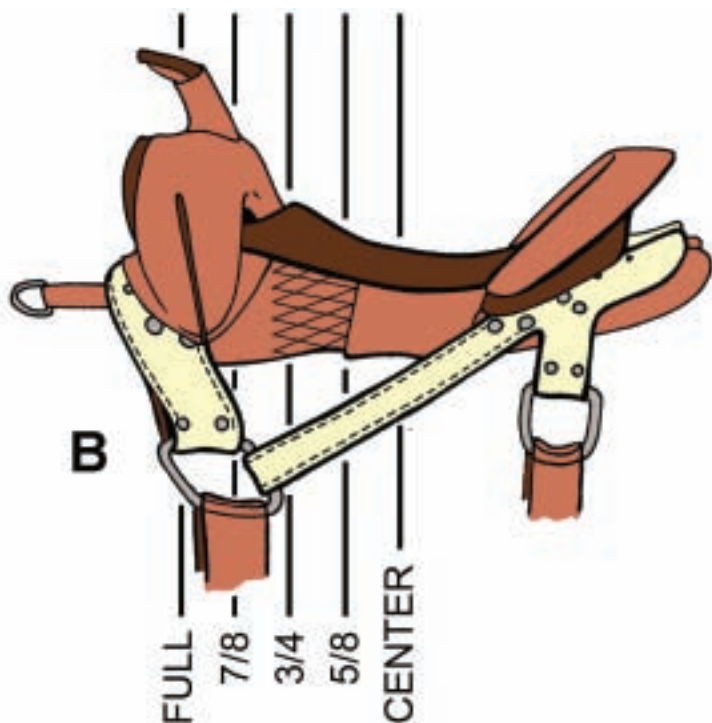


Fig. 7: Dave Genadek’s flat-plate rigging which utilizes polygonal “rings” to equalize pull. Note that the dee for a breast collar is attached to the tree, not the skirt. Area for attachment of stirrup hangers (hatched) is rearward, close to the deepest part of the seat. Rigging positions are marked.

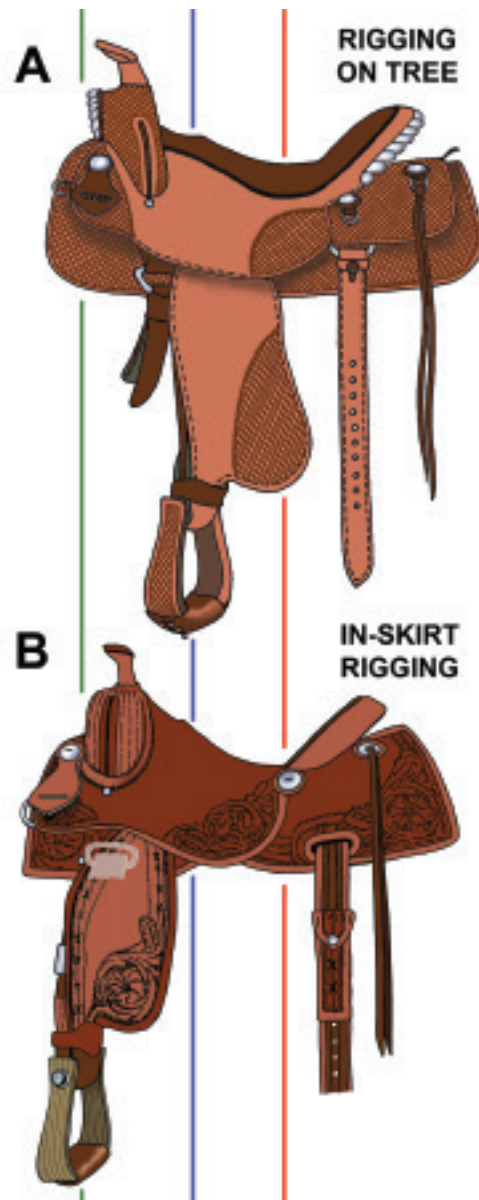


Fig. 8: **A**, well-designed saddle. **B**, design that I do not recommend. Key points to look for (see also Figs. 4 and 7): rigging on tree; ring for rear cinch present; deepest part of seat (red line) near the center; fore part of seat not steeply ramped; stirrups hang no more than six inches ahead of the deepest part of the seat (blue line); skirts and fenders soft and pliable; horn and fore-arch stoutly attached to bars. In **B**, note how far ahead of the deepest part of the seat the stirrups hang (green line), and the in-skirt rigging (the fore ring is shown as a “ghost” because the fender is so far forward that it covers the slot for the cinch).

With this list in mind, here are more bogus ideas to beware of:

The skirts bear weight: Weightbearing is the job of the tree; skirts, panels, or fenders ought to bear no weight and should be soft and flexible. If the skirts on a “western” saddle are bearing any weight, it is because they are either stiff with age or attached wrong to the bars. If the skirts are chafing the horse’s back, it may be because the rear part of the saddle is squirming left-right (see below under “saddle fit”).

In-skirt rigging: A hot new concept forty years ago, this design was introduced as a way of reducing bulk under the rider’s leg (Fig. 8). But if the saddle is rigged through the skirts, when the girth is tightened the skirts no longer “float” flexibly over the horse’s body. Girthing the fore skirt causes it to dig into the triceps muscle (Fig. 17). When the ring for the breast collar also comes off the skirt, the whole shoulder becomes trapped, forcing the horse to shorten its stride.

One cinch is enough: Most modern “western” saddles are rigged neither center-fire nor full-double, but somewhere in-between (Fig. 7). The commonest positions for the girth are 3/4ths or 7/8ths, which cause the pull to concentrate towards the fore arch. Having a fully functional rear cinch helps hugely in equalizing pressure borne by the front vs. rear of the bars. This single change—adding a fully functional rear cinch—is one of the most important steps any rider can make to cause whatever saddle they have to fit and function better on their horse. Of course it requires that the rider take the time, and learn the skill, of teaching the horse to wear a snug rear cinch.

A rider ought to be comfortable in the saddle: Yes, but skillful riding demands a particular posture which does not come naturally to most people. No doubt most riders are comfortable with thighs extended forward, heels jammed down, and buttocks pushed firmly back against the cantle. So popular is this incorrect way of sitting that MOST saddles mass-manufactured for sale in the U.S.A. are designed to accommodate it: the seat is steeply ramped up the front, the lowest part of the seat is far to the rear/just in front of the cantle, while the stirrup-hangers are placed far forward (Fig. 8).

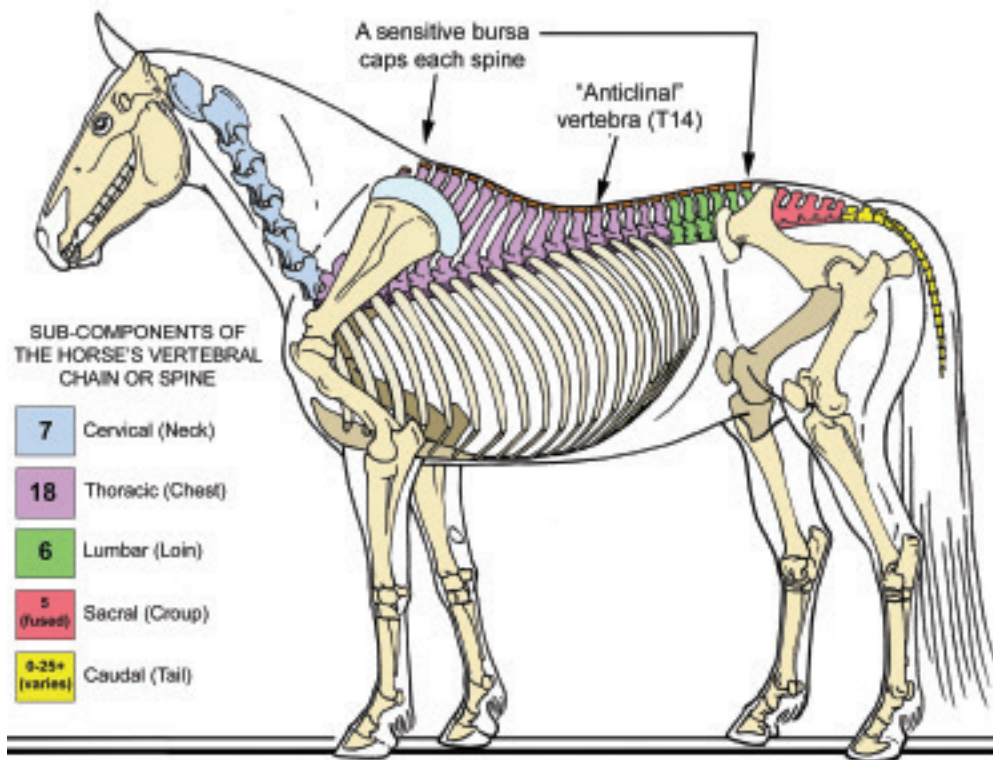


Fig. 9: Skeleton of the horse, lateral view. T16, the anticlinal vertebra, is also sometimes called the diaphragmatic vertebra because the muscular root of the diaphragm attaches to its ventral surface.

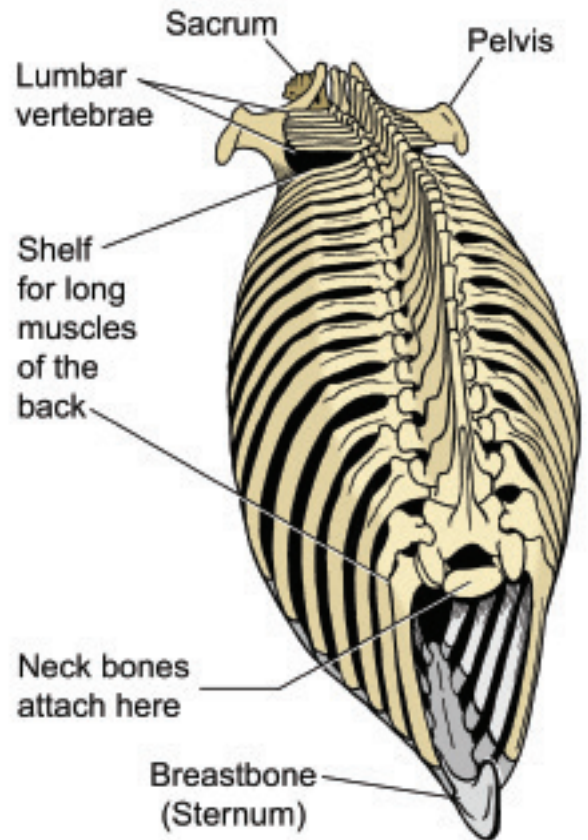


Fig. 10: Bones comprising the rib cage, showing upward-pointing dorsal processes of vertebrae, and the “shelf” upon which the longissimus dorsi rests.

Don’t think that this problem applies only to “western” saddles: several European manufacturers of dressage saddles cynically produce two versions of certain models—a “European” version in which the stirrup hangers are placed correctly, and an “American” version in which they are as much as nine inches farther forward. Have you taken dressage lessons and been frustrated because you felt that you had to continually drag your stirrups backwards in order to get your feet under your body? Your troubles come from the stirrups being hung too far forward.

The one circumstance where stirrup-hangers should be placed forward is when the job requires the rider to stand in the stirrups, i.e. jumping and barrel racing. Saddles for these tasks need to have forward-hung stirrups so that when the rider stands, thus moving her pelvis forward, her feet are under her. However, please note: these specialty saddles are NOT suitable for “flat work” or slow-speed



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schooling. The so-called “combination” English designs are an attempted compromise, but most successful 3-Day Event and Jumper riders have learned that they need two separate saddles, one for days when most of the work will be flat-schooling, the other for jumping. Barrel racers would do well to take a page from their book.

SADDLE FITTING

Saddle Fitters: Employing saddle-fitters is a very recent fad which arose out of the real frustration that many riders have experienced in getting any saddle that will not gouge their horse’s back, rub his hide, creep back or forward, cramp his stride or make him sore. Nonetheless you need to be aware that most of those who call themselves “saddle fitters” are actually salespeople working for one or another manufacturer. They receive a commission when they succeed in convincing you that the brand of saddle they’re peddling is the one you need.

This is not to say that such persons lack knowledge and skill; the problem is that they have the same vested interest that the guy on the used-car lot has. This goes double for people who work in tack shops or booths at horse expos; they often have zero knowledge of either horse anatomy or the principles of saddle design. They are the ones who are most likely to try to sell you on the biggest bogus idea of all, that the saddle they’ve got in their store or booth will fit ANY horse. This is an outright lie.

Scare Tactics: This leads me to mention another myth that needs busting: that saddles with wooden trees “gouge horses in the back.” This unethical sales pitch is an attempt to scare you into making a purchase. As we have seen, trees do not gouge because they are made of wood or some other rigid material; if they gouge, it’s because they do not fit. Conversely, flexible-treed or so-called “treeless” saddles neither fit nor function better than saddles with rigid trees, and in fact can also gouge the horse (Fig. 2B).

Rubs: Even a small rub can put a horse out of commission for riding, and they can be slow to heal. If the rub is under the girth, it’s because the saddle has been placed on the horse wrong (Fig. 16), the tree is bridging (Fig. 2C) or the fore-arch is too narrow (Fig. 3B). Girth rubs can sometimes be eliminated simply by changing to a mohair girth.

If the rub is on top of the withers, the gullet is too low and/or there is too much rocker in the bars (Fig. 3)—or the saddle is way too wide. A rub in this position is potentially very serious and calls for an immediate change of saddle. If the rub

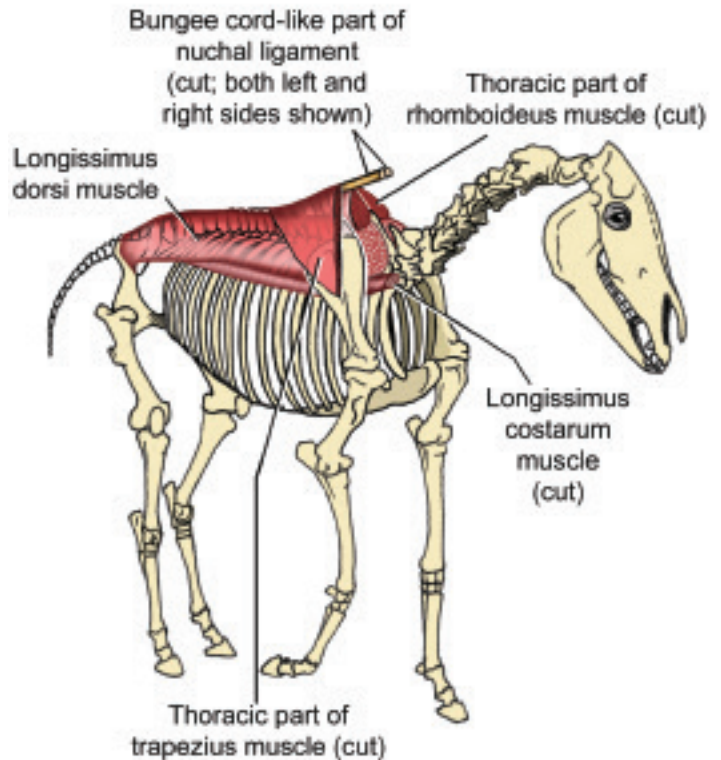


Fig. 11: Layers of muscle and bone. The fore arch of the saddle presses down upon the thoracic trapezius muscle, while the center of the bars and the cantle arch press down upon a completely different muscle, the longissimus dorsi. Note there is no bony or socketed connection between any part of the forelimb and the horse's rib cage.

appears in the “pocket” behind the withers, it’s likely because the bars don’t have enough flare at the front to allow for shoulder movement (Fig. 3B).

Crookedness: There is another common reason, however, why horses get rubs on one shoulder or worse on one shoulder: the horse is moving crookedly. Whenever rubs appear on only one side, it can only be for one of two reasons: either the saddle tree is warped, or else the horse is. No manufacturer or saddle-maker deliberately makes crooked saddles. A saddle tree can

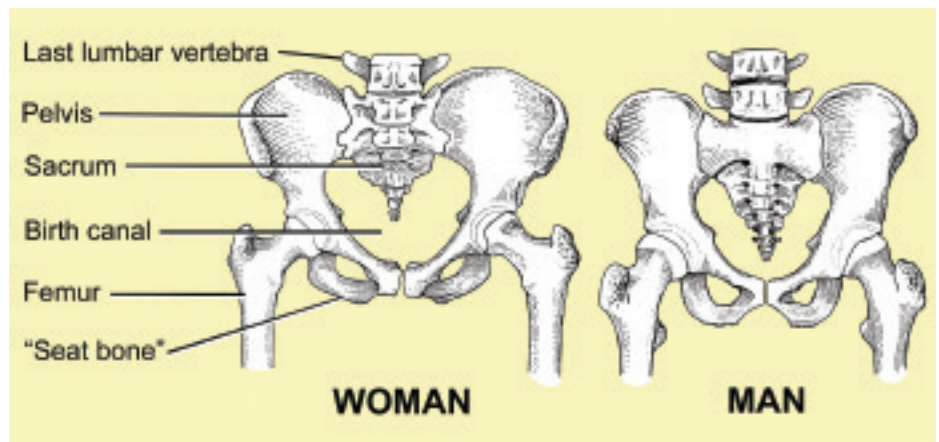


Fig. 12: Anatomy of the pelvis, lower back, and upper thighbones in men vs. women; front view. The typically male pelvis is narrow and upright; the hip sockets are relatively large; the ischia or seat bones loop lower than a woman's and are differently shaped (see Fig. 14).

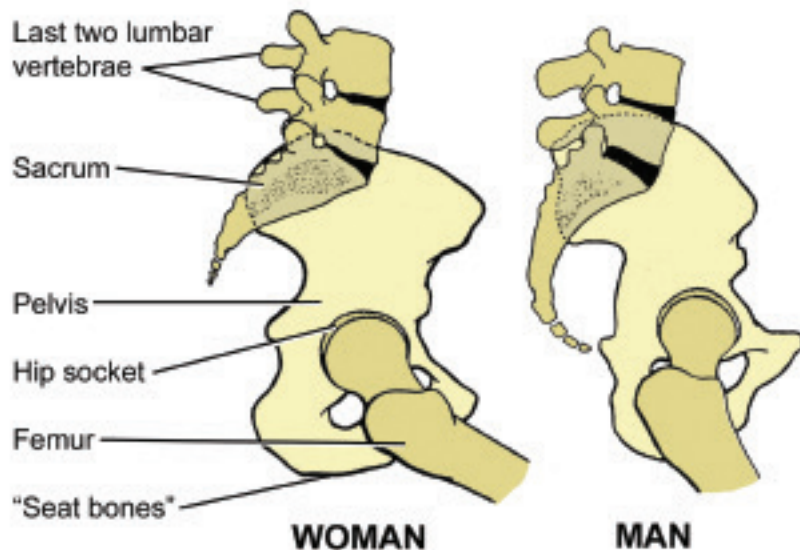


Fig. 13: Male vs. female in side view. At rest, the woman's thighbones orient much more to the front. The man's sacrum is longer and his tailbone angles downward. Most importantly, the angle between the lowest lumbar vertebra and the sacrum is much sharper in the woman; her lower back is thus more curved. A male beginner will tend to "sit on his pockets" with a slack back, whereas a female will tend to stiffen and hollow her back.

become warped through use, and twisted, mis-manufactured saddles have also been seen. Especially if you're looking at used saddles, the trueness of the tree is the first thing you need to check. If the tree is true, however, that leaves only one possible culprit.

The first step in understanding what crookedness in the horse looks like is to read the abovementioned .pdf entitled "Lessons from Woody." The trick here is to turn your thinking inside out: instead of picturing putting the saddle on the horse, instead picture it floating in the air—and the horse walking up underneath it. If the saddle tree is true, but the horse moves crookedly—for example leaning to the right, with more weight on the right forelimb—then the animal's right shoulder is going to crash into the right underside no matter what saddle you put on him. Until the rider learns how to train her horse to move straight, she will continue to have saddle-fitting problems.

Saddle Creep: Putting breast collar and/or crupper on the horse is not a way to stop creep; if these straps are used, they should never be adjusted tight—certainly not tight enough to hold the saddle in place for normal riding. The reason saddles creep backwards is that the fore arch is too narrow. Not perceiving this, riders will commonly try to stop creep by over-tightening the girth—which causes the rear part of the saddle to pop up. When the horse trots, his back flexes quite a bit to left and right in time with his stride, causing the rear skirts of a "popped up" saddle to wig-wag from side to side, scrubbing across the top of the animal's back.

You can easily tell when this has been happening, because you'll see the hairs in that area pointing left and right instead of in their natural orientation pointing to the rear.

There is no fix for a fore arch that is too narrow—except getting a different saddle that fits better. You cannot fix it, as I've said, by adding a breast collar, by tightening the girth, or by using a thicker saddle blanket. If your shoes are already too tight, it does not help to add another pair of socks. The meaningful way to measure the width of the fore arch is shown in Fig. 3.

Saddle Placement: Only when the saddle has been placed on the horse correctly can it be determined whether it actually fits the horse, so it's important to know how to "seat" the saddle on the horse's body. Initially, put the saddle on with no pad or blanket. Put it on ahead of where it should go, and pull it slowly backwards, feeling for the place where, of its own accord, the saddle seems to want to "seat." Then, without girthing it, press down on the seat. If the tree is too wide for the horse, the saddle will not want to stop until it's obviously too far back, and will "nose-dive" in front when you press. A fore arch too wide or too low will bring it into contact with the top of the withers. If it's too narrow, it will "prop" on his shoulder muscles or visibly bridge. After trying the saddle

bareback, put it on again over a saddle pad or blanket, and girth it snugly; lift the panels or fenders and feel along the length of the bars for proper clearance vs. gapping or gouging (Fig. 2).

Girth Position: If the saddle is a pretty good fit, depending upon the design of the rigging, the girth MAY OR MAY NOT fall close behind the elbow. Repeat: what they told you in Pony Club is bogus—the saddle girth does NOT have to lie right behind the elbow (Fig. 17). Fig. 16 shows an example of a rider who has gone about girthing backwards: she clearly thinks it more important to have the girth in a certain place than to have the saddle in the right place.

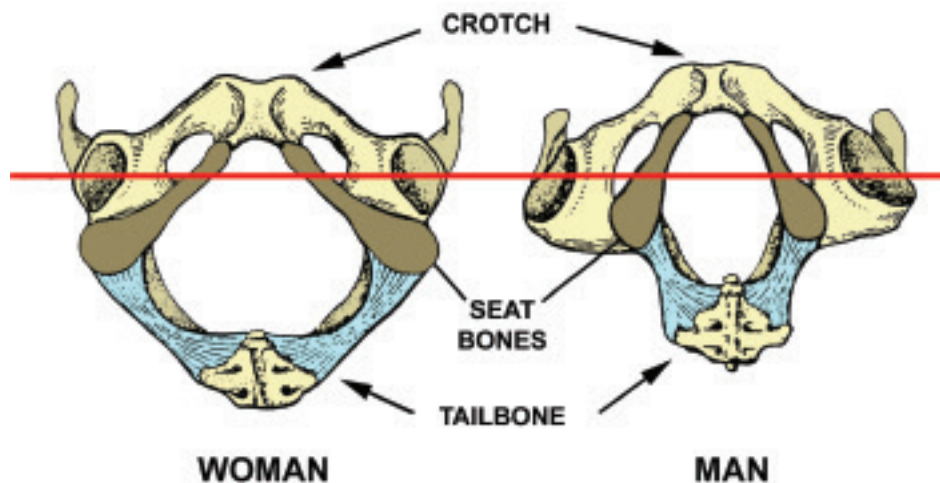


Fig. 14: View of the bottom surface of male vs. female pelvis. This is the aspect that contacts the saddle. Red line marks the hip socket axis, around which the pelvis balances. The "seat bones" or ischia are dark brown. No wonder men and women sit and function differently when riding! There is a great need for saddles adapted to women's anatomy.



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WHAT YOU NEED MOST

So desperate are many people to get a workable saddle that after listening to me speak, someone in the audience will often ask, “So Dr. Bennett, what brand of saddle do YOU ride?” My response is a categorical “no”: no, I will not mention what brand of saddle I am currently using, because the BRAND of the saddle is not what matters! What all riders need to learn is not what brand to buy, but to NOTICE the shape of their horse’s particular back and identify saddles in which the “horse-conforming surface” appropriately matches that shape. Experience gained by observing and comparing the backs of different horses definitely helps in developing this skill.

What I mean by “experience in observing and comparing” is this: Fifteen years ago I was in Australia to give a horsemanship clinic. On the first day, a participant approached me at lunchtime and asked permission to hang her saddle on the rail with a “for sale” sign. I said “sure,” and she brought the saddle out. I took one look at it and said to her, “Well, it’s already sold—I’d like to buy it.” As it happened, that very month I had been looking for a saddle to fit my gelding Oliver, and I knew the moment I saw this gal’s saddle that it would fit him. Mind you, at that moment Oliver was half a world away in California.

I brought the saddle back with me, put it on Ollie, and it fit him perfectly. Dave Genadek came out to visit not long afterwards; I had him look at it and he suggested that I tweak the

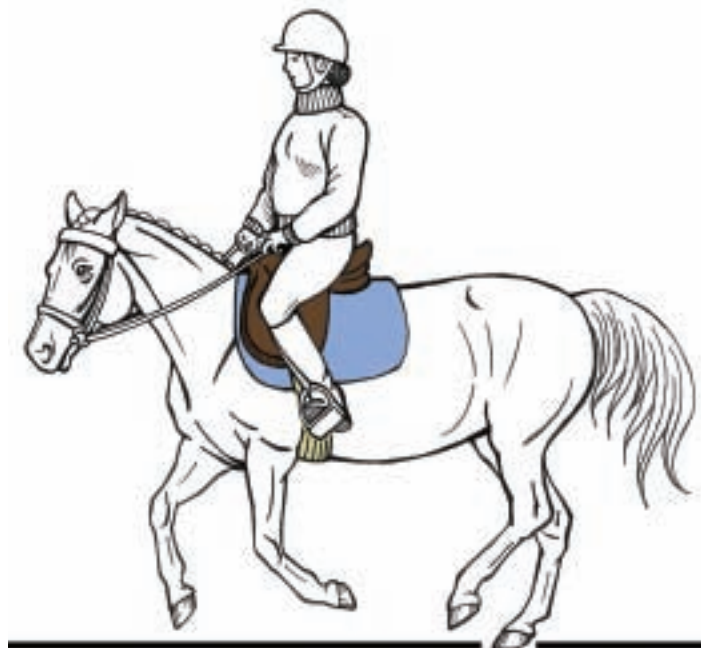


Fig. 16: This saddle has been placed on the horse so as to guarantee that the girth rests right behind the elbows. The animal will soon be sore in the shoulders and may get a rub or serious bruising over the top of the withers. See text for the proper way to put the saddle on the horse.

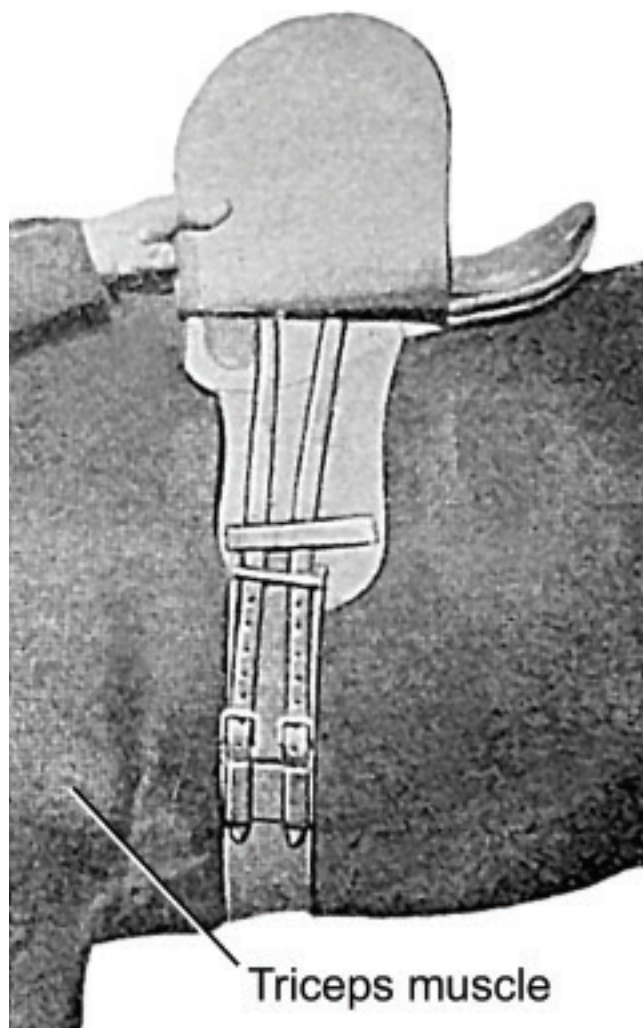


Fig. 17: Lord Lonsdale’s semi-Y-fork rigging system to improve fit in an old-fashioned flat English hunting saddle. The English peer correctly perceived that the rigging must equalize pressure at front and back of the bars by bringing it to the middle. Note the position of the girth, which allows room for movement of the thick triceps muscle lying behind the shoulder, which comes back with the elbow at every step (From M. Horace Hayes, DVM, “Riding and Hunting”, 1901).

rear band of the “Y”-fork rigging. I’ve used this saddle ever since without needing any further adjustment.

But anybody can make a mistake. What would have happened if my educated guess had turned out to be wrong? I would have put the saddle up for sale, possibly taking a small monetary loss in trade, and then gone on looking for another one more suitable. Note that I do not say, “another one in my price range,” because when you find a saddle that fits your horse, you should be willing to pay good money for it.

Of course you should look for quality materials and method of manufacture, but price is not a reliable gauge of quality: an expensive saddle can be badly made, badly designed, and not fit either you or your horse. Now that you’ve read this article, I hope you’ll empower yourself by viewing Dave Genadek’s “About Saddle Fit” video and by reading the other material suggested. Once you’ve done that, I invite you to trust yourself, because I think you are perfectly capable of finding the right saddle to fit your horse. That’s just one important facet of good horsemanship.

Classified Ads

Premier horse facility in southwestern New Mexico, Mimbres Valley. 43 Acres (2 legal parcels), all usable land, bordered by the Gila National forest for great riding out the back gate. Easy living, energy efficient, custom home with grid-tie solar and generator backup. Wrap around porch, patio with ramada, hot tub, sauna. Covered arena with sand/rubber footing, round pen, four stall Barnmaster barn, garage, lots of extra storage. 30+ acres of pasture, native gramma grass, cross-fenced into ten pastures and turnouts, 3 with run-in shelters. Turnkey sale includes all farm equipment. State of the art "Grow Dome" greenhouse. Optimal privacy with excellent access off of quiet, 2 lane paved road. \$1.3MM. suechiverton@gilanet.com, 575-536-3109 for information. Photos available. NM

List of available saddles were made by Bub Warren/Franklin Saddle Co. A legacy and history of 64 years has stopped taking orders and will sell remaining inventory listed below. Photos are available, call for more information. Also large inventory of chaps. Located in Klamath Falls, OR. 541-350-2876.

#1 - Lady Wade - SQH 8 x 6 1/2, 9" fork 4 1/2" cantle, 3/4 ring rig single 16" seat (15 1/2), wood post horn 3 3/4" x 4 1/2" horn cap, Wyo. half leathers w/Blevins, Calif. round skirts - 28-30 lbs, \$4,100.

#2 - Old Mexico slick fork - 15 1/2" seat, 4 1/2" cantle, SQH 8 x 6 1/2, 9" fork, Mexican horn 3' x 3 1/2" cap, Calif. round skirts, Wyo. half leathers, geometric & floral, Blevins, \$5,800.

#3 - Will James 15 1/2" - SQH 8 x 6 1/2, half breed floral & plain, Cheyenne roll, 3/4 double rig, post dally 3 3/4" x 2 1/2" cap, mule wrap, Blevins with twist, Arizona single leathers, Calif. round skirts. \$5,200.

#4 - Will James 16", rough out & floral, calif half leathers to lace 3/4 single stainless, SQH 8 x 6 1/2, 5 1/2" cantle rawhide rim - gullet rawhide, horn rawhide cap 3 1/2" x 2 3/4" cap, mule wrap, Calif. round skirts, RO/carved bulldog taps, \$6,000.

#5 - Bowman Roper 16", Calif round/SQH skirts, rawhide cantle & horn, 3/4 double ring rigging, post day 3 3/4" x 2 3/4" h, basket & oak leaf, 4" cantle, Arizona single leathers, Blevins, \$5,800.

#6 - Old Mexico Slick, SQH 8 1/4 x 6 1/4, 16" seat, 9" fork, Mexican horn 4" front of horn cap 6 1/2", fully oak and floral, 5 1/2" cantle, buck rolls, RD - square skirts, Calif. style fenders, 3/4 single ring rigging, carved stirrup hoods, custom mohair cinch with 1880 silver concha rigs (1860 early Calif. Mexico tree style). \$8000.

#7 - Improved Assoc.- SQH 8 x 6 1/2, 4" cantle, Post Dly, 3" x 2 3/4" cap, Calif. half leathers, 24" eagle bill taps, Calif. wild rose with basket, 3/4 single bronze ring. \$8750.

#8 - Will James 16", SQH 8 x 6 1/2, Post Dally 3 3/4" x 3" single ring rigging, rope rolled cantle & fork gullet, with laced w rawhide, large square skirts, Calif 1/2 fenders, 8 button seat, 26" eagle bill taps, stepping silver conchos and horn cap (Bill Lusk) full floral carved. \$11,950.

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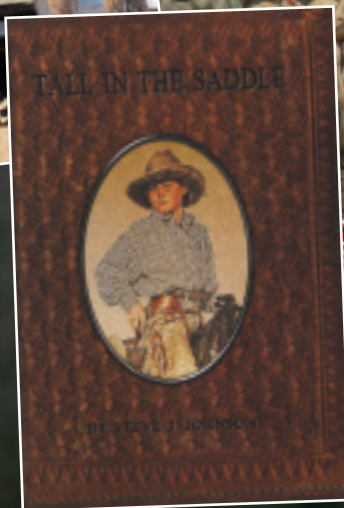
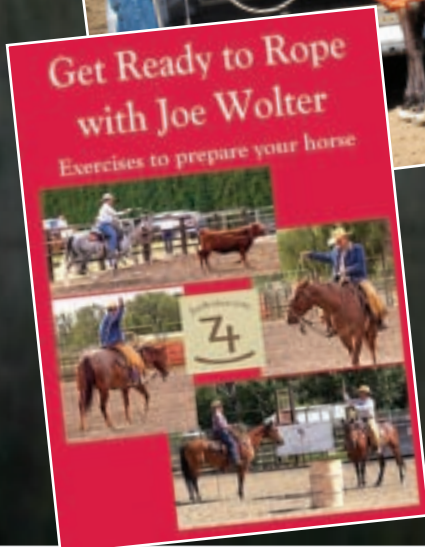
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Peter Campbell demonstrates how you might get a horse ready to load in the trailer. Using four fresh horses just run in from pasture on the ranch he gets each one ready in the time that horse needs to feel comfortable about loading. Some horses take just a few minutes; others longer. The point is not the time that it takes, but that when each horse decides it is ready to load he does so with ease and confidence. We hope this DVD gives you an understanding of how to prepare your horse to load in the trailer and gives you some ideas to help your horse be safe and comfortable.

From The Great Basin Tradition - Roping Fundamentals with Martin Black \$30

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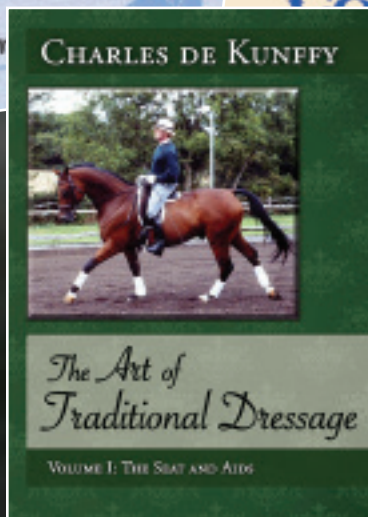
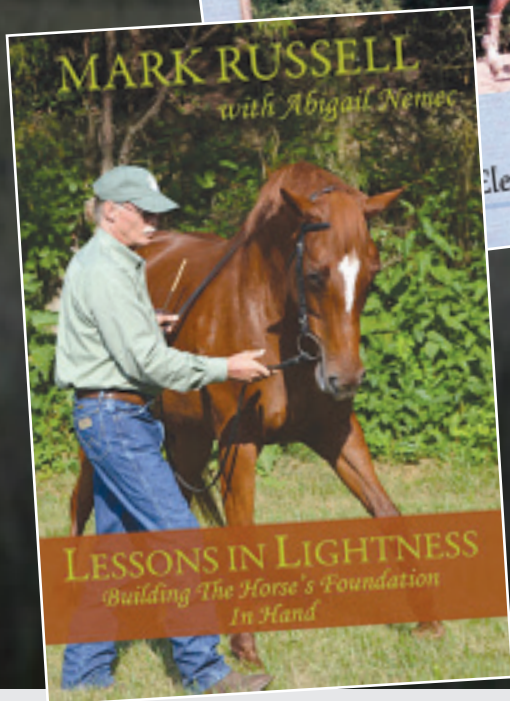
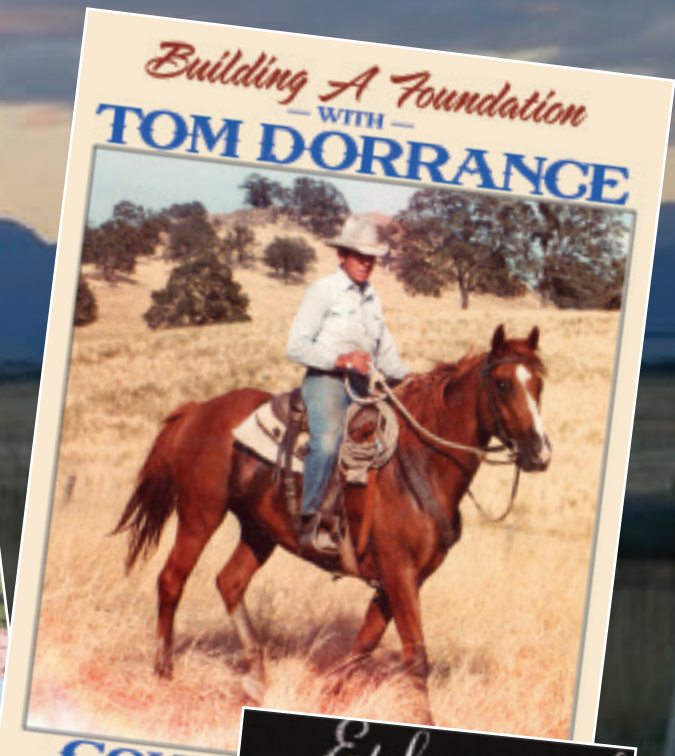
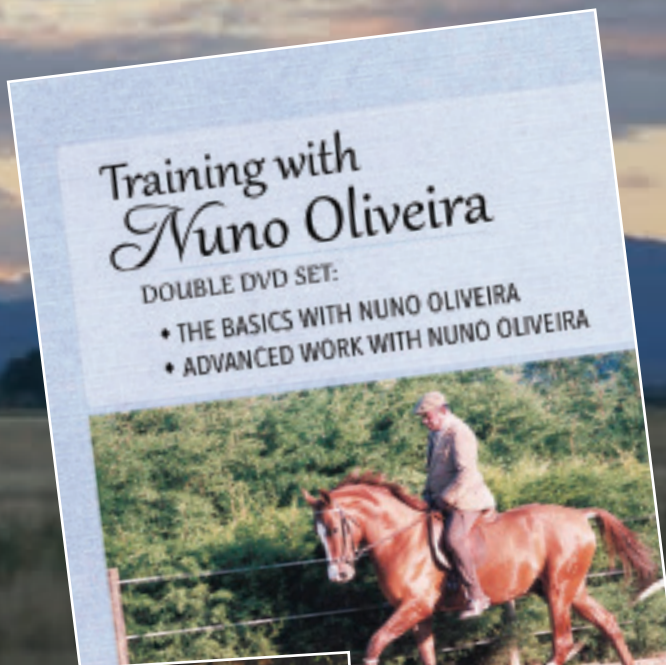
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Tall in the Saddle by Steve Johnson \$20

The Horse: The Epic History of Our Noble Companion \$16.00

Journey To Softness by Mark Rashid \$16.95

Mark Rashid shares and analyzes the remarkable events, quiet moments, and humbling stumbling blocks that—looking back—he can identify as significant in his personal journey to finding “softness” with both horses and people. “Softness,” via what many in the horse world today might refer to as “feel,” begins, Rashid says, with one simple truth: “It’s not about what we do that starts us on the path to softness, but rather, it’s what we don’t do.” Readers learn methods and techniques gleaned from decades of work with horses, horse people, and the “way of harmony” through the martial arts. Paperback.



LESSONS IN LIGHTNESS - Building the Horse's Foundation In Hand DVD with Mark Russell \$49.95

- Discover the nuances of gymnastic exercise for the horse
- Learn the importance of biomechanical alignment
- Enhance the horse's freedom of movement and energy flow
- Improve body language skills to connect with the horse in lightness

Building a Foundation with Tom Dorrance - Colt Starting and Beyond \$59.95 2-DVD set

Filmed at a 3-day Texas clinic in the 90s. This DVD features two 3-year-old

roan colts off of a ranch. Only one was halter broke, and we see that how they were started would help them.

Training with Nuno Oliveira Double DVD Set "The Basics" and "Advanced Work" \$79.95 2-DVD set

These candid DVDs include unheard footage of Nuno Oliveira teaching at his home manège. It is amazing to watch Nuno Oliveira ride his own horses at home and to listen to his comments and descriptions of the aids while riding one of his horses. These personal videos filmed by Eleanor Russell at Avestada, Portugal.

The Art of Traditional Dressage: The Seat and Aids by de Kunffy \$49.95

The centerpiece of this DVD is a unique and thorough description of how to obtain the correct rider's position on horseback and how to maintain it in motion by integrating the rider's structure with the horse's motion.

Ephemeral - A Novel by Andie Andrews \$11.95

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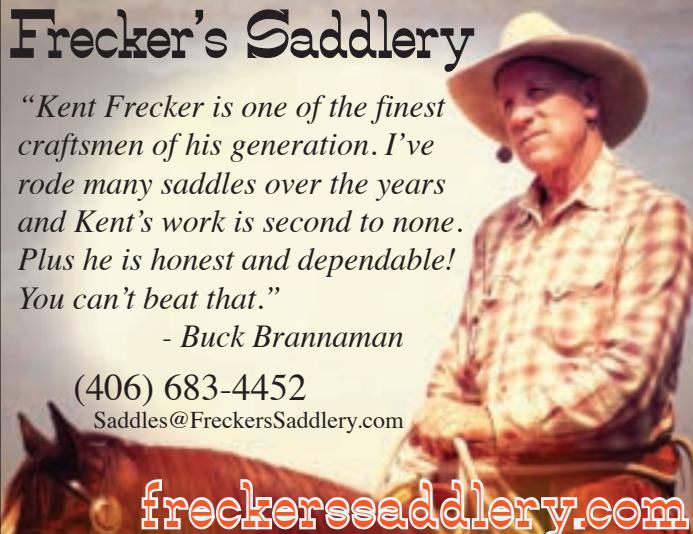



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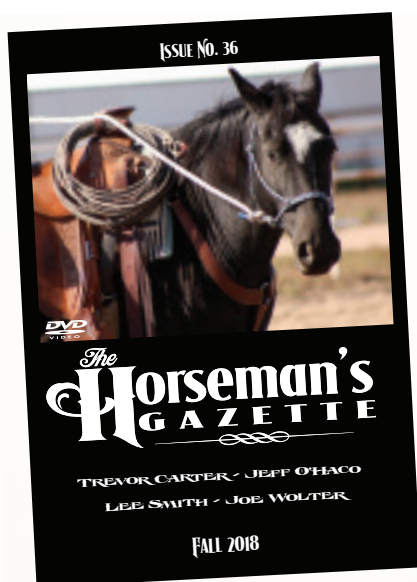
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THE HORSEMAN'S
GAZETTE ISSUE No.36 -
FALL 2018 \$40.00

A Herdbound Exercise with Joe Wolter 17:57

Having a horse whose attention is elsewhere can inhibit our interactions with him and can also be dangerous. Even if the disconnect is subtle it's important to be aware of whether our horse is truly with us mentally. At a recent clinic Joe Wolter helps a student address this issue, and even though the horse's response is not dramatic when the other horses leave, it is enough to work through to effect a positive change.

Basic Lateral Movement with Trevor Carter 37:01

Trevor Carter demonstrates how he might introduce basic lateral work to his horse and some common pitfalls to avoid.

From Groundwork to Riding with Jeff O'Haco 42:58

Jeff O'Haco helps us make the connection between groundwork and riding as we watch him ride a young horse that he has prepared on the ground.

Saddling Tips and Groundwork with Lee Smith 38:05

Lee helps some students that have trouble saddling their horses by sharing tips for being better organized as well as strategies for making saddling be smoother. She offers some suggestions for modifications to saddling for small women and kids.



THE HORSEMAN'S
GAZETTE ISSUE No.37 -
WINTER 2018 \$40.00

The Not-So-Basic Basics with Steve and Amy LeSatz 49:11

Sometimes the basics are not so basic. From saddling to bridling, catching to leading, those fundamental skills can set the tone for all your interactions with your horse. Steve and Amy LeSatz offer some great guidance on getting things to go right from the beginning and build a solid foundation with your horse.

Canter Transitions with Alice Trindle 51:23

Riding balanced and calm transitions up to the canter can be a challenge for many riders. Alice demonstrates on a young and energetic horse ways to help a horse be prepared to make good transitions. This is not a drill for transitions but a way to feel of your horse and help him through the transition.

The Square with Trevor Carter 28:02

Once you have a start on some basic lateral movements it is time to put them to use in some different ways. Trevor Carter uses a square exercise to show you how to incorporate lateral movements within a controlled space. He guides you through strategies for approaching different challenges as well as common pitfalls.